

**Understanding home language use in Chinese families who are living in the United States**

by

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**ABSTRACT**

More than half the world's population is bilingual (Faroqi-Shah et al, 2010), and more than 55 million people in the U.S. are bilingual (Grosjean, 2012). However, many U.S. immigrants will become monolingual in English instead of remaining monolingual in their home language or becoming bilingual (Grosjean, 2012). Several experts have mentioned that there are programs that can foster dual language learning and encourage children to maintain their home language (Tabors, 2008; Zelasko & Antunez, 2000; Cunningham-Andersson & Andersson, 2011), but little research about how to inform families of the benefits of these programs and support them in maintaining their home languages is available. There is a lack of research about how families from groups who speak a home language other than English maintain their home language in the U.S. More needs to be known in order to support families who speak non-English languages. This study focuses on Chinese families, the largest Asian group living in U.S., to understand more about how families help their children maintain their home languages. This thesis study used an online survey to explore parents' attitudes toward and strategies for maintaining children's home language among Chinese who are living in the U.S. The study revealed that an overwhelming number of Chinese parents strongly agreed that it would be important to teach their children their home language. However, parents had differing opinions regarding whether maintaining their children's home language was related to maintaining their home culture and the benefit to their children's future careers. Parents reported experiences and strategies used in supporting their children's home language development. Future research and implications for supporting families were also suggested.

## CHAPTER 1. INTRODUCTION

### Background and Significance of Study

Approximately 50% to 67% of the world's population is bilingual. More than 55 million people in the U.S. speak English and another language at home. Among those people, 51 million, or almost 20% of the U.S. population, were proficient in using English and their home language, and would therefore be considered bilingual (Shin & Kominski, 2010). More than 10 million students currently enrolled in U.S. schools speak a language other than English (Zelasko & Antunez, 2000). However, bilingualism has become transitional in the United States, which means over one or two generations, most U.S. immigrants will become monolingual in English instead of monolingual in their home language or bilingual (Grosjean, 2012). Home language refers to the language that is most commonly used by family members for daily interactions at home (Nordquist, 2013). It is also called native language, ethnic language or heritage language. I will use the term "home language" in this paper.

Since 2000, the number of Asian immigrants in the United States has grown by 45.6%; of these, 23% are Chinese (Siek, 2012). Increasing numbers of Chinese American children are learning English at home or in the community in addition to learning Chinese (either Mandarin or Cantonese). Maintaining their home language has become a challenge for many of these Chinese immigrant families. Previous researchers have shown that most Chinese parents have a positive attitude toward bilingualism and most families have strategies for maintaining their home language (Wu, 2005; Zhang & Slaughter-Defoe, 2009).

In order to understand the complexity of bilingualism for Chinese families in the U.S., we also need to understand that there is not just one "Chinese" language. Chinese people speak a multiplicity of dialects. The national language, or the most common, is Chinese Mandarin, which is spoken by over 70% of the Chinese population in the north, northwest, west, and southwest

parts of China. Cantonese is a dialect spoken by 70 million people mainly in the southeast of China, particularly in Guangdong province, Hong Kong and Macau. Chinese dialects have different complexity and sometimes are difficult for Chinese people from different regions to understand. A person from Taiwan who speaks Mandarin may not understand the language of a Cantonese speaker from Hong Kong (Lynch & Hanson, 2004). There is no research exploring if the dialect the family speaks has an impact on their attitudes toward maintaining their home language or becoming bilingual in the U.S.

Being bilingual is a skill that should be valued and encouraged by teachers and caregivers. Zelasko and Antunez (2000) have mentioned that maintaining their home language skills will not interfere with children acquiring English; on the contrary, it can enhance the process. A child who is bilingual has social, personal, cognitive and economic advantages throughout his or her life. These advantages include the fact that bilingual children can have active and flexible brains that will promote solving math concepts and word problems. Children who learn English and maintain their home language will do better in school, compared to children who are monolingual in English. In addition, learning one's home language often is a significant part of learning one's cultural identity. Children will begin to learn and value their culture as they continue developing their home language. Moreover, children who are encouraged to learn and use their home language will have more opportunities to interact with their extended family and the local ethnic community (Zelasko & Antunez, 2000). An individual who is a good bilingual speaker will have more chances to study, travel, and work throughout the world (Education Development Center, Inc, 2013). Another advantage stems from the increasing need for bilingual employees throughout the world; a person who has the ability to read, write

and speak in two or more languages will have a big advantage in the job market (Zelasko & Antunez, 2000).

There are several ways U.S. immigrant families often attempt to maintain their children's home language when surrounded by English speakers. Some strategies include going to a home language weekend school, using home language at home, reading storybooks in the home language, telling family stories and morals to children, going back to home country with their children, and making connections with a local ethnic group (Cunningham-Andersson & Andersson, 2011).

Spanish-speaking families have claimed that maintaining home language is difficult and children are not interested in learning their home language (Lutz, 2008). In addition, Spanish second generation immigrant adults mentioned that even though they were trying to keep their home language as they grew up, they were more comfortable communicating in English (Rohani et al. 2006). Chinese immigrant families reported that they believed knowing Chinese is an extra skill for their children; in particular, they believed that their children can get an advantage in a future global job market if they possess Chinese language skills (Wu, 2005). Chinese families also make efforts to promote children's home language skills; however, the immigrant children failed to see the connection between home language learning and their daily lives (Zhang & Slaughter-Defoe, 2009). Korean immigrant parents were very positive toward maintaining their children's home language. They believed that their children's proficiency in the Korean language would promote their children's Korean cultural identity, as well as facilitate better economic opportunities, and children could communicate with their grandparents more efficiently (Park & Sarkar, 2007).



Some researchers have examined how immigrant families maintain their children's home language, but most studies have been done with Spanish-speaking immigrant families. However, there is a lack of research about how other ethnic groups such as the Chinese ethnic group keep their children's home languages in the United States. A few qualitative research studies have been conducted with a small number of Chinese immigrant families in limited geographic areas (Wu, 2005; Zhang & Slaughter-Defoe, 2009; Fillmore, 2000; Rohani et al., 2006), but few quantitative studies have been done to examine these issues. More research studies are needed to explore the type of home language they use with their children at home, parents' roles in keeping their children's language, and if families are keeping their culture as well as their home language at the same time.

### **Purpose of Study**

Little is known about how families maintain their home language in the U.S. where English is the primary language spoken. What little research has been conducted has focused on Spanish-speaking families. More needs to be known in order to support families who speak other languages. Chinese immigrants are the largest Asian group, so it seems logical that we need to know more about how their families address this issue with their children. The purpose of this study was to discover attitudes and strategies Chinese families use to maintain children's home language.

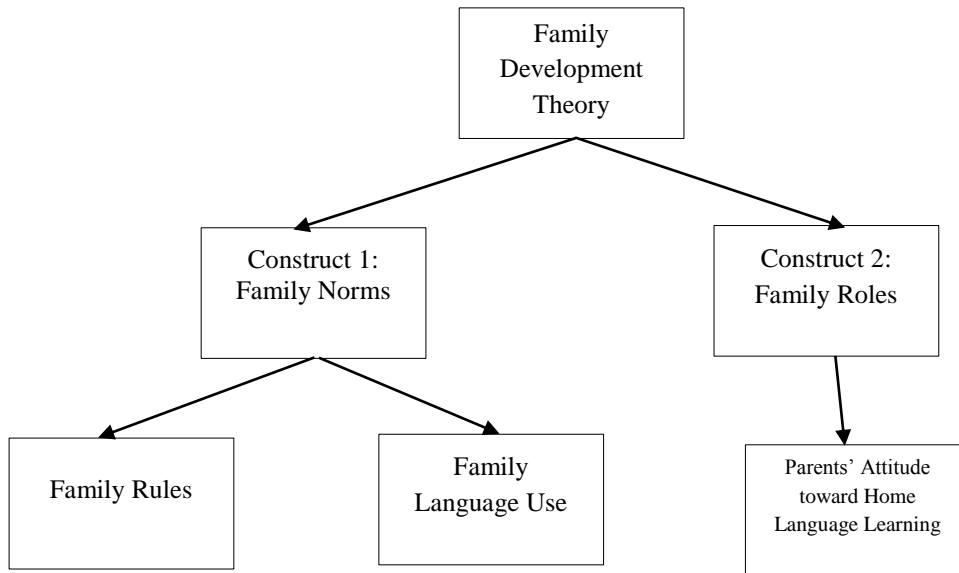
The following research questions were addressed with a survey:

1. What is the relationship between family demographic background and parents' attitudes toward maintaining their children's home language?
2. What is the relationship between parents' attitudes toward maintaining children's home language and their use of home language with their children?

3. What is the relationship between parents' attitudes toward maintaining their children's home language and their use of strategies to support children's home language learning?

### **Theoretical Framework**

This paper focused on Chinese parents' roles in maintaining children's home language. Family Development Theory, one of the subcategories of Family Life Course Theory (White & Klein, 2008), was the core theory guiding this paper. Family development theory focuses on the events and stages occurring in the family as well as the interactions among individuals in the family. Norms and roles are two of the main constructs within family development theory. Family norms are the social rules that direct individual and group behavior. Family language is the home language that family members use to communicate, therefore family language can be one of the subcategories of family norms; family norms also include family rules that govern family members' behaviors. In this study, family rules indicated that family members set up rules about the language they would use at home. Family roles, another construct that guided this paper, reflected the different roles individual family members played and their impact on family functioning. In this study, family roles indicated that family members play a significant role in children's home language development. In summary, family norms and family roles were the theoretical constructs that guide the paper; in particular, family language use and parents' attitudes toward home language learning were the focus of the study (see Figure 1).



*Figure 1.* Theoretical framework and constructs.

This study also incorporated human capital theory and social capital theory as a secondary theoretical framework. Human capital is measured by nonmaterial resources that are provided by the parents, such as cognitive support and values that are indexed by parents' education level. Social capital theory refers to the relations between children and parents, as well as the connections between the family and the community. It has been said that social capital can be a very important socioeconomic resource for immigrant families, which means immigrant family members can be at an advantage in terms of socializing with their children. Coleman (1988) also believed that effective relationship between family members can be critical for human capital to transmit from parents to children (Bornstein & Bradley, 2014). If human capital is not complemented by social capital which reflects in family relations, it can negatively affect children's educational growth (Coleman, 1988). Although this study did not directly measure the relationship between parents and their children, it assessed ways parents seek support from resources such as family members and Chinese cultural groups to maintain their children's home language. When describing an example of the importance of human capital in a family, experts

have suggested that parents who have a high school degree or some higher education experience can provide a more cognitively rich environment that may support children's success in school compared to parents with less schooling (Bornstein & Bradley, 2014). The current study included parent's education level as an example of providing intellectual support that help their children to learn their home language. In particular, this study examined the relationship between parents' education level and their opinions regarding maintaining their children's home language, and if parents used different amount of strategies based on their education level. Both human capital theory and social capital theory represented how families support on children's home language maintenance.

### **Structure**

This thesis follows a traditional thesis format. Chapter one is the introduction of the thesis; chapter two is the literature review, chapter three contains the method, chapter four presents the results, chapter five is the discussion and the conclusion of this paper. References, list of figures and illustrations, and appendices follow the other parts of this thesis.

## CHAPTER 2. LITERATURE REVIEW

### Overview

This study focuses on home language maintenance for Chinese families who are living in the United States. Since the Hispanic population represents the largest ethnic group in the United States and Spanish is the most common language other than English that is spoken, I would like to know how Hispanic families use Spanish and how they maintain their home language with their children. In addition, South Korean population represents a large portion among Asian group in the U.S. and both South Korea and China have similar cultural components, it is also necessary to include Korean immigrants in the literature review. Therefore, in addition to Chinese families, this literature review will also incorporate Hispanic families and Korean families' use of their home language and how they maintain their home language with their children. Research from these groups will be used to guide the current study.

About 50% to 67% of the world's population is bilingual. According to the 2007 American Community Survey, more than 55 million people spoke English and another language at home. Among those people, 51 million were proficient in using English, and would therefore be considered to be bilingual (Shin & Kominski, 2010). More than 10 million students currently enrolled in U.S. schools speak a language other than English (Zelasko & Antunez, 2000). However, bilingualism has become transitional in the United States, which means over one or two generations; U.S. immigrants will become monolingual in English instead of monolingual in their home language or bilingual (Grosjean, 2012). Home language refers to the language that is most commonly used by family members for daily interactions at home (Nordquist, 2013). It is also called native language, ethnic language, or heritage language. I will use the term "home language" in this paper.

The 2010 Census report indicates that there are 50.5 million Hispanic immigrants in the United States, which constitutes 16.3 percent of the nation's population. The Hispanic population, who primarily speak Spanish, are the largest ethnic group in the United States. Hispanic or Latino origin refers to individuals who come from Mexico, Cuba, Puerto Rico, South or Central America or other Spanish-speaking cultures regardless of their race (Ennis, Rios-Vargas & Albert, 2011).

According to the 2010 Census, the number of Asian immigrants has risen from 19% to 36% since 2000 (Pew Research Center, 2013). Among the 17.3 million Asian immigrants, four million were Chinese, which has become the largest single ethnic group among Asians (Siek, 2012). Korean people also represent a great amount of population (1.7 million), which made the fifth place among U.S. Asian groups (Pew Research Center, 2013). Asian Americans and Asians are widely distributed in various states, with most living on the coasts. New York City has the highest number of Asians in the U.S., and most of the population is Asian Indian and Chinese. Los Angeles has the second largest Asian group, with 484,000 Chinese forming the biggest subgroup (Siek, 2012).

In Iowa, there are 151,544 Hispanic people, which is an increase of 86% since 2000. They comprise 5% of the Iowa population (Ennis, Rios-Vargas & Albert, 2011). On the other hand, 53,094 people identified as Asian are living in Iowa. While they constitute a much smaller population group, the number of people of Asian descent has increased by 76.1% since 2000. These Asian people compose 1.7% of the Iowa population. Among Asians, 5.8% are Korean and 17.7% are Chinese, and Chinese has become the second largest subgroup (Hoeffel, Rastogi, Kim & Shahid, 2012). In Iowa, Spanish is the second most widely used language; however, there are

10,460 people who speak Chinese at home, which becomes the most prevalent Asian language in Iowa (State Data Center of Iowa, 2013).

English has become an essential communication tool for young immigrant children in order to live in the U.S. because it is the language used in school, business, and community settings. Immigrant children not originally from the U.S. are second generation, which means that they were either born in the United States or immigrated to this country at a young age. Some of these children are considered bilingual because they learn their home language from their parents who are the first generation that immigrated to United States. Even though there are a number of families fostering bilingualism for their children to maintain their home language and culture, more families are encouraging their children to acquire English, which is considered their second language (Grosjean, 2012).

Learning English as a second language while living in mainstream U.S. society makes maintaining their home language a significant challenge to some immigrant families. Portes and Hao (1998) stated that the United States is a graveyard for foreign languages and that the home language of hundreds of immigrant ethnic groups has rarely passed on through the third generation. Even though America is a multilingual and multicultural society, many minority languages are lost as people are shifting to using only English. Krashen (1998) stated that home languages are not well maintained and are barely developed. Since English often replaces the home language, few young Chinese immigrant children are bilingual and these children often do not want to speak their ethnic language because the minority language is afforded inferior status by the society (Wu, 2005). Place and Hoff (2011) stated that parents' language background and attitudes toward maintaining their home language has a significant impact on how much of the home language children will be exposed to and acquire. Most research has explained how

Hispanic bilingual families maintain their home language to understand the interaction of attitudes, culture, and population size; some studies have been conducted with Korean families. More research is needed to understand if similar issues impact other language populations in the United States. This literature review will examine ways Hispanic, Korean and Chinese ethnic groups maintain their children's home languages: the current language situation among Hispanic, Korean and Chinese groups; attitudes about the importance of maintaining their home language among Hispanic, Korean, and Chinese groups; and strategies used to maintain home language among Hispanic, Korean and Chinese groups.

### **The Current Language Situation Among Hispanic, Korean and Chinese Groups**

#### **Hispanic Group**

Portes and Hao (1998) found that among 5,000 second generation immigrant students from Florida and California, English is universal and dominant and only a minority of immigrants remain fluent in their home language. However, among all the immigrant nationalities, Spanish is more strongly supported than other foreign languages in the United States through Spanish-speaking media and the large population of Spanish-speaking people (Portes & Hao, 1998). Still, many Spanish-speaking families claim that it is difficult for them to maintain a Spanish language home environment for their children. Some children, even those born in Mexico, are losing their ability to communicate in Spanish. Many parents have mentioned that Spanish-speaking children become less interested and refuse to speak Spanish at home when they reach school age (Lutz, 2008). In New York City, among lower middle class families, English is dominant among adult second generation Spanish immigrants.

Rohani et al. (2006) examined minority language maintenance among four different ethnic groups in New York City. This exploratory study targeted the adult second generation immigrants' experiences of growing up bilingually. There were six participants in the Hispanic



ethnic group, three of them grew up in the United States and three immigrated when they were less than three years old. All participants were dominant English speaking with varied proficiencies in Spanish. Only one of them did not grow up in a home where Spanish was used. One participant described that Spanish was only used when his parents intended to keep information away from him. Even though all subjects were making efforts to keep their home language, they were more comfortable communicating in English.

### **Korean Group**

Even though the Korean language is not as supported as Spanish in English speaking countries, Korean families that immigrated to the English speaking countries were very positive toward maintaining their children's home language. Park and Sarkar (2007) examined Korean language maintenance among Korean-Canadian families living in Montreal, Canada. Nine Korean immigrant parents whose child (or children)'s ages were between 6-18 participated in the interview. The findings revealed that parents believed their children's proficiency in the Korean language could promote their children's Korean cultural identity, and it would not interfere with their ability to attain English skills. What's more, knowing their home language would give them a better opportunity in the job market, and family members would become more cohesive especially between the children and their grandparents. A study of 40 second generation Korean American college students showed that most second generation Korean American students had some Korean language proficiency, but they all agreed that they needed to learn more to reach fluency (Lee, 2002).

### **Chinese Group**

Similar to the Korean group, Chinese first-generation immigrant parents believe that it is important for their children to maintain their ethnic language and learn English simultaneously.

However, they also admit that it is difficult to maintain home language because of the pressures to use the mainstream language (Wu, 2006). Although parents are making efforts to promote their children's home language skills, most Chinese immigrant children fail to see the connection between home language learning and their daily lives. They perceive that learning Chinese is hard, and is not important since they do not use this language at school or with their friends. Zhang and Slaughter-Defoe (2009) learned that only young children are motivated to learn a new language because at this young age, they usually learn about Chinese through entertaining games and activities; besides, their academic school tasks are not challenging at this stage and they have free time to enjoy learning Chinese. Older children (above 3<sup>rd</sup> grade) often express little motivation for learning Chinese. These children reported that they resist learning Chinese because they spend their after-school and weekend hours studying Chinese, during which they could have enjoyed non-academic activities (Zhang & Slaughter-Defoe, 2009).

Fillmore (2000) conducted a qualitative case study with a single Chinese immigrant family living in California. The family had four children; two came to the U.S. before school age and two were born in the U.S. During the 10 years of this study, all four children became more Americanized as they grew older; they also gradually lost the ability to use their home language. Since the parents and grandparents knew little English, they did not understand the language that the children spoke and the children did not understand the adults. Both children and parents lacked the ability to communicate with each other because the parents' were working all day in a Chinese restaurant. The author indicated that the children thought the inability to speak English was a handicap because they believed English was the only language that would be accepted. Therefore, the children indicated that their home language was unimportant, and it had no value to them.

By contrast, the support Chinese families obtain from the community in New York City shows a significant difference from that in California. The Chinese community in New York had strong institutional support, with significant Chinese language media both in Cantonese and Mandarin, twenty Chinese language weekend schools, as well as a number of Chinese churches and temples. Rohani and colleagues' (2006) study of Chinese home language maintenance examined six individuals; half were born in the United States and half immigrated to this country at a young age. Participants' ages ranged from twenty-three to twenty-seven, and all were currently living or working in New York City. All the participants had grown up in the Chinatown area. Almost all individuals self-determined that they were fluent Cantonese speakers, but had limited skills in reading and writing. All participants indicated that they would teach their children Cantonese by speaking to them, and some would also take their children to a local Chinese school to learn reading and writing. They wanted their children to maintain ties with family members and older relatives, either living in the United States or in Hong Kong who do not speak English.

### **The Importance of Maintaining Home Language Among Hispanic, Korean and Chinese Groups**

#### **Importance of Bilingualism**

A child who grows up with two languages has a unique opportunity to acquire skills in two different languages in a way that another child who learns a second language later in life can barely achieve (Cunningham-Andersson & Andersson, 2011). This child can not only gain the knowledge of two languages, but the riches of two cultures, and have the probability of becoming a linguistically and culturally competent adult. Researchers have shown that bilingual children perform better than monolingual children on certain cognitive tasks (Grosjean, 2012). In

2004, bilingual and monolingual preschoolers were given the task of sorting blue circles and red squares into two digital bins on a computer. Even though both groups performed the same on sorting colors, the bilinguals were faster than the monolingual children on sorting by shapes (Bhattacharjee, 2012). However, some parents believe that using two languages will confuse their children, even though no research evidence has verified this. On the contrary, using two languages in the same conversation is near as to be a “sign of mastery” of both languages (King & Fogle, 2006, p. 2). Additionally, in some countries, proficiency in foreign languages increases the potential to earn higher wages, as well as increasing chances to be selected in the job market (Gabszewicz, Ginsburgh & Weber, 2011). One study also showed that developing home language competence can positively enhance social interactions and relationships in pursuing careers. Korean-American families reported that their proficiency in the Korean language would give them benefits in their careers, especially in pursuing jobs within the Korean community (Cho, 2000). Grosjean (2014) commented that bilingualism provides people a passport to experience other cultures and enrich themselves. People who are bilingual can also become an intermediary to translate languages among people who do not understand each other’s languages.

### **Factors Contributing to Home Language Maintenance**

Being bilingual means a person knows two languages. However, as mentioned previously, as more families who speak languages other than English immigrate to the United States, in order to fit into the American society, bilingualism is not a choice for every family. Some families will face the loss of their languages. According to Family Development Theory, factors that could influence the process of maintaining home language include family norms and family roles. Family norms represent family language use and family rules. Family roles is related to parents’ attitude toward children’s home language learning (see Figure 1). In addition

to family norms and family roles that I introduced in the theoretical model, researchers have found that other factors, such as home factors and community factors also influence bilingual children's language development. Home factors include family SES and family home language use; community factors include culture and family ethnicity (Dixon et al, 2012). In the following paragraphs, in addition to family language use, family rules, and family roles, family SES and family ethnicity will also be introduced as the main factors that contribute to home language maintenance.

**Family Language Use.** Family language is the primary language that caregivers use at home. Parents' language use at home has a close relationship with children's language use. If both parents use more home language than the mainstream language at home, the children will be more likely to use the home language (De Houwer, 2007). Interactions between parents and children in home language is the most essential factor in determining whether immigrant children's home language skills will be maintained or lost (Lao,2004; Li, 1999). A research study conducted on Dutch language use in Moroccan and Turkish families showed that the more mothers from Morocco and Turkey used their home language with their children, the larger the children's native language vocabulary (Scheele, Leseman, & Mayo, 2010). Guardado (2002) explored the maintenance or loss of Spanish in Hispanic children who were living in Vancouver, Canada. The result showed that all Hispanic immigrant children depended on their parents for home language maintenance. Parents who motivated their children to speak their home language in a positive way can facilitate their children learning their home language, which leads to home language maintenance; whereas passively demanding children speak their home language can have a negative effect, which leads to home language loss. Duursma et al. (2007) showed that among Spanish-speaking English learners in the United States, children's larger Spanish

vocabularies were associated with parents' high use of Spanish at home. A mother's use of Spanish at home has been found to be essential to the development of children's Spanish vocabulary, and it does not interfere with their children's English language growth (Hammer, Davison, Lawrence, & Miccio, 2009).

**Family Rules.** Family rules explain the rules of language use in the family. It is usually the parents' decision about which language can be used at home; however, some families do not set up language rules for their children at home. Even though children are born in the U.S., some Chinese-American families allow children to speak English when they are little; however, some families enforce the rule of only speaking Chinese at home when children get older (after they enter 1<sup>st</sup> grade). For example, some parents state that maintaining their Chinese home language is very important, and parents will force children to speak as much Chinese as they can at home. One study showed some Chinese American families had applied a rule about language use at home to support children maintaining their Chinese ability. Parents would force their children to speak Chinese as much as possible. For instance, if a child speaks English at dinner time, the parent will ask the child to leave the table and stand somewhere else (Wu, 2005).

**Family Roles.** Family roles explain parents' attitudes and beliefs toward English language learning as well as maintaining their home language. It also includes parents' duties and responsibilities in promoting home language maintenance. Kuo (1974) showed that a child can learn another language more proficiently when parents use that language more frequently between themselves and with the child. Additionally, parents' behavior and attitude toward a home language affects the children's behavior and attitude toward that language. Thus, parents' beliefs, performance and preferences in using languages will affect children's language choice. However, parents' roles in children's home language development has been studied little.

More studies have been focused on school curricula impact on children's language development rather than parent impact. Winsler (1999) investigated the bilingual language development among two groups of low-income Hispanic families whose children either did or did not attend a bilingual (Spanish/ English) preschool. The first study involved 26 children who attended a bilingual preschool for one year and 20 control children who stayed at home. The second study represented a one year longitudinal follow-up investigation of the same groups of children during and after they spent another year either at home or in the school. The results revealed that children who enrolled in bilingual preschools showed significant increases in English language proficiency, as well as significant and parallel gains in Spanish language compared to the children who remained at home. Some evidence in these studies showed that high quality bilingual preschool programs promoted children's competency in both languages, rather than hindered the improvement of Spanish proficiency. However, even though the evidence showed that the implementation of the curriculum enhanced bilingual children's language development, this study did not examine the impact of family practices (the family's role in their children's language development). For example, if the parents who send their children to bilingual schools also have a positive attitude toward maintaining children's primary language, the parental role could have an impact on children's home language development by frequently using Spanish at home with children, as well as be reflected in different strategies for maintaining home language. There has not been enough research that examines the role of a family on the development of children's bilingual language proficiency.

The majority of Latino parents think that bilingualism can maintain family and heritage culture as well as giving children an advantage in the employment market (Lutz, 2008). Researchers have found that 40% of Hispanic parents speak Spanish with their children at home;

at the same time, 50% of the families were making the effort to maintain their children's home language. Even though 80% of Hispanic parents had a strong positive attitude toward maintaining the second generation's Spanish, only 50% of Spanish-speaking families think home language learning for academic success in an English-speaking school is important, and 40% rate it as unimportant (Yan, 2003). However, Latino parents who are struggling with English usually emphasized developing English proficiency with their children at home even though they also view speaking Spanish at home as an ideal way of becoming bilingual. They believe that it is essential for children to attain a high-level of English proficiency in order to succeed in the United States (Lute, 2008)).

Korean immigrant parents have reported that they believe that there is a relationship between home language skills in children's academic success and second language acquisition. One parent believed that her child needed to have a solid foundation in her first language to achieve academic success, so that her second language acquisition could be developed (Park & Sarkar, 2007). This statement also reflected that a strong foundation in minority children's home language can promote their learning a second language and their second language academic skills (Cummins, 1989).

In comparison to results from Spanish and Korean speaking families, Chinese parents who are first generation immigrants all had a positive attitude toward maintaining their home language. Most Chinese parents think that the Chinese language is an extra skill their children can have; in addition, it will be beneficial for their children to learn Chinese since later they will be able to find a job at Asian markets (Wu, 2005). Six Cantonese-speaking interviewees generally had positive attitudes toward maintaining Cantonese (Rohani et al., 2006). One participant stated that she considered it was useful to speak Chinese and she felt it was a symbol



of “where she comes from” (p. 42). She also mentioned that her parents accomplished a decent balance with her Chinese education. All the participants indicated that they would let their children approach Chinese in the same way they had learned from their parents by speaking to them or sending them to Chinese school. In this way, they can maintain connections with family members or older relatives who cannot speak English. Another research revealed that family cohesion, “the emotional bonding that family members have toward one another”, was an important factor that can affect children’s home language maintenance (Olson et al., 1984, p. 60). Tannenbaum and Howie (2002) examined the impact of family cohesion on home language maintenance among Chinese immigrant children in Australia. They found that the closer and more cohesive family relationships were, the more likely the immigrant children would maintain their home language. As well, when the relationships between the parents and the children were cohesive and secure, maintaining home language would not be a barrier for the children acquiring a new language (Tannenbaum & Howie, 2002).

**Family Ethnicity.** Family ethnicity describes an ethnic group to which a family belongs. Lynch and Hanson (2011) have reported that the Chinese American ethnic group is the largest Asian subgroup in the United States, with a population of nearly 3.5 million in 2010. The Chinese ethnic group reflects an extremely heterogeneous distribution in the United States. Some Chinese families immigrated to the United States six generations ago, whereas others have been here less than a week. They come predominantly from Guangdong and Guangxi Provinces in mainland China, Hong Kong and Taiwan. However, although there are more than three million Chinese immigrants living in the U.S, most Chinese immigrants choose to speak English because they want to live and belong to American society where English is the dominant language (Wu, 2005). However, every year more people around the world whose mother tongue is not Mandarin

Chinese are studying it enthusiastically. In the job market, international business programs favor people who can speak more than one language, especially people who can speak Chinese (Boston University, 2013). Based on the fact that more and more people who do not have a Chinese background are learning Chinese, in my perspective, U.S. Chinese immigrants should be more dedicated to learning their mother tongue. However, there is a widespread phenomenon in the U.S. society that more immigrant children are in danger of losing their home language skills after they enter the American schools and study the target language-English (Carol, 2009). These immigrant children include children whose ethnicity is Chinese. The assumption regarding their loss of language is that they have a high exposure to the dominant English group and they forget their cultural heritage and how it affects them (Carol, 2009).

Korean immigrant parents strongly supported their children's home language maintenance because they wanted their children to keep their cultural identity and believed that home language maintenance can form their cultural identity more positively (Park & Sarkar, 2007). A study conducted in Singapore also showed how Malay people maintain their home language in Singapore. Even though there were four official languages (English, Mandarin Chinese, Malay, Tamil) in Singapore, Malay children still tended to use Malay more than Chinese children use Chinese (Saravanan, 2001). The reasons that contribute to high maintenance of Malay were that Malay was widely used in both home and school; Malay people had the strongest ethnic identity in Singapore compared to other three major ethnic groups (Pakir, 2008); and the Malay community viewed the Malay language as an essential part of its identity and had a very strong support for it (Kamsiah & Ayyub, 1998). Does ethnic identity also apply to Chinese groups? Does it make a difference among Chinese immigrants who have community support for home language versus those who don't? Will the local culture, ethnicity,

and community support make a difference in a Chinese immigrant's view of "family identity?" There is one research study showed that Chinese parents had a strong Chinese ethnic identity and were clearly aware of their cultural roots, as they mentioned "Without the Chinese language, you are no longer Chinese" (Zhang & Slaughter-Defoe, 2009, p. 84).

**Family SES.** There is a relationship between family's socioeconomic status and children's language achievement, especially for bilingual children. Researchers have shown that in monolingual studies, children who were coming from high SES families had larger vocabularies and better performance in school than those who came from low-SES backgrounds (Dixon et al, 2012). Moreover, differences in SES also have an effect on parents' attitudes and beliefs toward language use at home. Among Spanish-speaking families, families with different backgrounds have various beliefs regarding maintaining home language (Lopez, 2005; Lambert & Taylor, 1996). Families with low incomes have the fewest number of books in both Spanish and English; additionally, these families do not have explicit expectations about their children's language development, as well as their success in school. Some working-class families reported the greatest number of books at home in both languages, and these families spoke both English and Spanish at home (Lopez, 2005). However, among Cuban immigrants, most working-class mothers had an emphasis on encouraging children to speak English so that the children could succeed in America in the future (Lambert & Taylor, 1996). In addition, middle-class families had a proactive role in maintaining their children's Spanish language skills. These parents had the most years of education and believed that bilingual people will have more opportunities in the future; thus, they expected that their children will succeed in school. What's more, these families had a Spanish-only rule at home since they believed if children use mostly English at school and with friends, they must speak Spanish at home in order to maintain fluency in both

languages (Lopez, 2005). Middle-class Cuban immigrant mothers usually encourage their children to become competent in Spanish, not English; they believe Spanish language and culture should be protected and maintained throughout the next generation (Lambert & Taylor, 1996). On the other hand, researchers indicated that parents with higher education levels tended to get more resources for their children to develop their language skills, and they tended to have positive views of bilingualism and therefore offer critical support for children in development in both languages (Lopez, 2005).

### **Strategies Families Use to Maintain Home Language in Hispanic, Korean and Chinese Groups**

Children who are bilingual have more to learn than monolingual children; therefore, they need more support from their parents. Parents in bilingual families need to spend a great amount of time talking actively and playing with their children. In order to maintain children's home language, it will be important for at least one parent to spend time speaking with their children in their own language (Cunningham-Andersson & Andersson, 2011). Cunningham-Andersson and Andersson (2011) have suggested strategies parents can support their children's home language development, including going to their home language education/weekend school, using home language at home, storybook reading, telling family stories and morals, going back to home country, and connecting with a local ethnic group. This study surveyed families about their use of all these strategies.

### **Home Language Education/Weekend School/Home Language Curriculum**

In some countries, preschools offer teachers who provide extra support to immigrant children in their home language in after-school programs. Additionally, some immigrant communities in other countries have weekend schools in which a teacher with skills in the native

minority language help the children who are bilingual (Cunningham-Andersson & Andersson, 2011). According to a survey conducted in Iowa, 50% of Spanish-speaking families have chosen bilingual schools for their children and 30% have their children enrolled in an English-language school with extra Spanish instruction (Yan, 2003). Some Chinese parents also make conscious attempts to send children to Chinese weekend schools and immerse children in Chinese-speaking environments (Zhang & Slaughter-Defoe, 2009). In New York City, since the Chinese language is well-supported by most of the Chinese community, children were sent to Chinese schools to learn Cantonese and Mandarin when they were young. However, even though individuals were willing to attend Chinese schools when they were young, some of them stopped attending because Chinese schools were not only taking their precious time on weekends, but also assigning homework. Some people claimed that as high school students, they had to quit Chinese school because they had to take SAT preparation classes; another reason for dropping out of the extracurricular Chinese program was due to children's lack of interest in the school and maintaining their Chinese language skills (Rohani et al., 2006). Other than sending children to home language schools, parents who spoke Mandarin Chinese with higher education level even brought textbooks and teaching materials from their hometown to teach children Chinese. Parents can use the textbooks to assign Chinese homework to their children every day (Zhang & Slaughter-Defoe, 2009).

### **Use Home Language at Home**

In order to maintain home language skills, some Hispanic families have insisted their children speak Spanish at home; however, since maintaining this rule is difficult for both the children and family, they allow their children to use at least some English at home (Lute, 2008). Some second generation adult immigrants from New York City also commented that they had

kept Spanish language use with their siblings. However, some of them also experienced some flexible rules of Spanish language use, one Hispanic immigrant adult mentioned, “Spanish was spoken in front of me, and I was welcomed to speak or not speak in Spanish” (Rohani et al., 2006, p. 72). According to a study conducted among Korean-Canadian families, nine parents in this study reported that they tried to communicate with their children in Korean at home regardless parents’ proficiency level in English and French. Parents would also try to use Korean as much as possible with their children even though their children’s Korean skills were not strong enough to communicate solely in Korean (Park & Sarkar, 2007). However, according to Chinese families, the rule of speaking home language at home is enforced more consistently. Most Chinese parents reported that they would only use Chinese as the home language when talking to their children at home (Zhang & Slaughter-Defoe, 2009). Some parents would force their children to speak as much Chinese as possible and the children will even be asked to leave the table if they speak English during dinner (Wu, 2005). Families living in New York City also reported similar strategies as families from other areas. Parents spoke Cantonese at home with children, especially when children were getting older and the amount of Cantonese speaking has been decreased (Rohani et al., 2006).

### **Storybook Reading and Mass Media**

In the book of *Growing Up with Two Languages*, Cunningham-Andersson and Andersson (2011) recommend that parents who have bilingual children can get many age-appropriate language materials in the minority language for their children, such as story books, tapes, videos, computer games, and materials that children enjoy and feel comfortable. According to reports from the Spanish-speaking group, 88% of Hispanic families tell stories, family background and moral values to maintain their home language for their children (Yan, 2008). However, few

families bought Spanish books for their children to practice Spanish; instead, children all received English books at home as they grew up (Rohani et al., 2006). Park and Sakar (2007) reported that Korean-Canadian parents also use books to help their children maintain their home language. Some parents used Korean vocabulary books to teach children the Korean language. Other parents also used the Bible and Korean videos that were designed for educational purposes, and used the internet to promote their children's home language skills (Park & Sarkar, 2007). Chinese-speaking parents would purchase children's books, videos, and comic books in Chinese from their hometown for their children. They even rented classical Chinese soap operas and reported that their children loved to watch them (Wu, 2005). In the Chinese community in New York City, most families had the access to Chinese media and popular culture, including reading Chinese newspapers and magazines and watching Chinese television or listening to radio programs (Rohani et al., 2006).

### **Visit Home Country**

In order to learn and maintain one's home language, it may be beneficial for children to travel with their parents to the home country where the minority language is spoken. Getting to visit the relatives in the home country can give children opportunities to experience and practice their home language. It is also viewed as important for these immigrant children to realize their family ethnicity as they travel in their home country (Cunningham-Andersson & Andersson, 2011). Some Hispanic second generation immigrants mentioned that they have visited their home country when they were young; they had great experiences being exposed to Spanish language in their home country (Rohani et al., 2006). Some Chinese parents will also take their children to their home country and let them experience more Chinese culture (Wu, 2005).

### **Connection with Local Ethnic Groups**

Another strategy that parents can use to maintain home language is to meet with other children and adults who can speak the home language in the community. Parents in the same ethnic community can arrange structured activities with other children who speak the same home language, which will be valuable for children to practice their home language (Cunningham-Andersson & Andersson, 2011). Some Hispanic parents have created opportunities for the second generations to be exposed to Spanish by residing in a Latino community (Rohani et al., 2006). Some Chinese parents take children to participate in various activities in the Chinese community and engage them in extracurricular Chinese educational programs (Zhang & Slaughter-Defoe, 2009). In a study conducted in New York City, Chinese parents supported their children engaging in various activities in a Cantonese-speaking community. Moreover, the children were connected to the Cantonese-speaking community, including shopping and getting services in Chinatown in New York City (Rohani et al., 2006). A study conducted in the U.S. among Korean immigrants suggested that Korean churches worked as a bilingual and bicultural place for Korean immigrant children (Pak, 2003). Park and Sarkar (2007) also mentioned that the Korean church served as a very important place for immigrant children to be exposed to Korean language and culture. However, the fact is that there is no research that shows the effectiveness of any of these strategies, or the effectiveness of any combination of the strategies in maintaining home language skills.

In summary, we have learned from previous researchers that it is quite important for families to maintain home language for their children, and children will also benefit from learning their home language. The majority of the studies have focused on teaching and learning a second language in an educational setting, and not very many studies have focused on parents



and caregivers' beliefs and strategies for maintaining their children's home language. Some studies have been conducted with Spanish families, a few have been done with Asian families, such as Korean and Chinese. However, only qualitative research have been studied with Chinese families who are living in large cities in the United States, and there is a lack of research regarding Chinese families' attitudes and strategies toward maintaining their children's home language in various American communities. Therefore, this study will be using a survey to capture Chinese parents' attitudes and strategies of maintaining their children's home language while living in both big and small cities in the United States.

## **CHAPTER 3. METHODOLOGY**

### **Institutional Approval**

This study was approved by the Iowa State University Institutional Review Board (IRB), including the survey, consent form for the respondents, and the recruitment procedure (survey was allowed to be posted on a few websites and a mail list). The IRB approval is on file with the lead researcher, which was me.

### **Participants**

A total of 530 Chinese families responded to the online survey; 479 respondents met all the criteria and were included in the study. Criteria to be included in the study included being 18 years old or older, being a parent of a child, and falling into one of the following categories: a Chinese-American who held American citizenship, a Chinese citizen who was a lawful permanent resident or a legal alien holding a U.S. visa (e.g. F1, H1B, J1) and living in the U.S. Fifty-one families were deleted for one or more of the following reasons: 23 families entered information for multiple children or the child was over 18 years old; 24 cases had missing key questions; 4 families mis-entered their ages. Therefore, 479 families were included in this study. Among these families, 89 families came from California, 53 came from Iowa, 55 came from Texas, and the rest were from other U. S. states. Each family had at least one child living in the home with the parents. Forty-seven percent of the children were male. Children's ages ranged from 5 months to 17 years of age: 30.3% were 0-3 years old; 46.8% were 3-8-years old, and 22.3 % were above 8 years old. Three fourth of the online survey respondents were mothers. Approximately 73% of the mothers and 87% of the fathers had a masters' or doctoral degree. The majority (40%) of the participants had lived in the U.S. for 10-15 years, and 27% claimed they had lived for 5-10 years. Almost 90% of the families spoke Mandarin Chinese with their

children at home, 8 mainly spoke Cantonese, 28 mainly spoke English, and 16 spoke other languages such as other Chinese dialects or a combination of languages (see Table 1).

Table 1

*Characteristics of Participants*

		N	%
Gender	Male	225	46.9
	Female	253	52.8
Age	0-3	145	30.3
	3-8	224	46.8
	Above 8	107	22.3
Parent respondent			
Mother	Elementary	3	.6
	High school	10	2.1
	Some college or associates' degree	20	4.2
	Bachelor's degree	85	17.7
	Some graduate school	7	1.5
	Graduate: master's/doctorate	353	73.7
Father	Elementary	2	.4
	High school	14	2.9
	Some college or associates' degree	4	.8
	Bachelor's degree	37	7.7
	Graduate: master's/doctorate	420	87.7
Family income	<\$15,000	5	1.0
	\$15,000-\$35,000	24	5.0
	\$35,000-\$55,000	23	4.8
	\$55,000-\$75,000	36	7.5
	\$75,000-\$95,000	48	10.0
	\$95,000 and above	334	69.7

Table 1. (Continued)

		N	%
Years living in U.S.	0-5	61	12.7
	5-10	130	27.1
	10-15	196	40.9
	15-25	89	18.6

### Procedure

The recruitment process started with contacting acquaintances throughout the U.S., including Iowa, Indiana, Texas, and New York City. Snowball sampling was used to recruit participants. Snowball sampling, is a method for finding research subjects, which means when one subject fulfills the study criteria, this subject is positioned to help the researcher to locate additional subjects in his or her social networks. This method helps researchers locate people who have similar characteristics and who know each other (Vogt, 1999; Warren, 2002). Although snowball sampling is usually used for qualitative studies, since the researcher was living in the central part of the U.S. where the number of Chinese-Americans was limited, it was the most effective method to recruit participants from a variety of geographic locations by passing on the survey to other Chinese-Americans through acquaintances. The researcher contacted the administrator of the Chinese church in Ames, Iowa. He was informed about the purpose of this study and the link to the online survey. The administrator then sent out the link to all Chinese-American families registered in the Chinese Evangelical Free Church of Ames. After the families completed the survey, they passed the link to other Chinese American families they knew. The researcher also personally visited the Chinese church and asked parents' permission to send out the survey link through emails. In addition, a friend of the researcher referred her to the administrator of the Chinese Association in Indiana. After the administrator was told the

purpose of the study and viewed the online survey, he agreed to contact the principal of the Chinese Language School in Columbia, Indiana. The principal received the on-line survey from the administrator and sent the link to all the Chinese-American families whose children were enrolled in her school. The families who received this survey were asked to complete it and pass this link to other Chinese American families they knew. The researcher also passed the survey link to acquaintances in Texas and New York City; their acquaintances were asked to pass the link to friends and relatives they knew who were living in the United States.

In addition to snowball sampling, the researchers also posted the survey link on the forum of several Chinese websites (6park.com, mitbbs.com, and backchina.com) dedicated to support Chinese nationals living outside of China. These websites broadcast information about national and international news, entertainment, modern living, and technology, which provided a space for overseas Chinese to interact and communicate in their home language. The survey link was also posted on the chinalianyi mailing list, which contained Chinese people living in Ames, IA. This mailing list mainly targeted Chinese people who are enrolled in the local university and Chinese people who reside in Ames. It broadcasted information from all members of chinalianyi mailing list, including goods trading, employment opportunity, and academic studies.

### **Measures**

A survey of twenty-five questions was developed for this study. Multiple resources were used to create the survey questions, including research studies about the issue of home language use among multiple ethnic groups in the U.S. Specifically interview questions that Wu (2005) asked in her qualitative study regarding Chinese parents and children's attitude and behavior toward bilingualism, and Yan's questionnaire were used as references to design the survey (Yan, 2003).

There were four sections in the survey. The first section asked for information about the family member who completed the survey and his or her child. The second section was about the use of home language by this family member and his or her child. The third section was about this family member's attitude toward home language use. The last section asked about the strategies and resources this family member used to maintain his or her child's home language. All data, collected from an online survey in a de-identified way, were made available through Qualtrics software, a university supported survey system to create free online surveys. It required users to log in to access the survey and respondents, which created security for data storage. All data were gathered through this system, and were then downloaded to a secure server for data management and analysis.

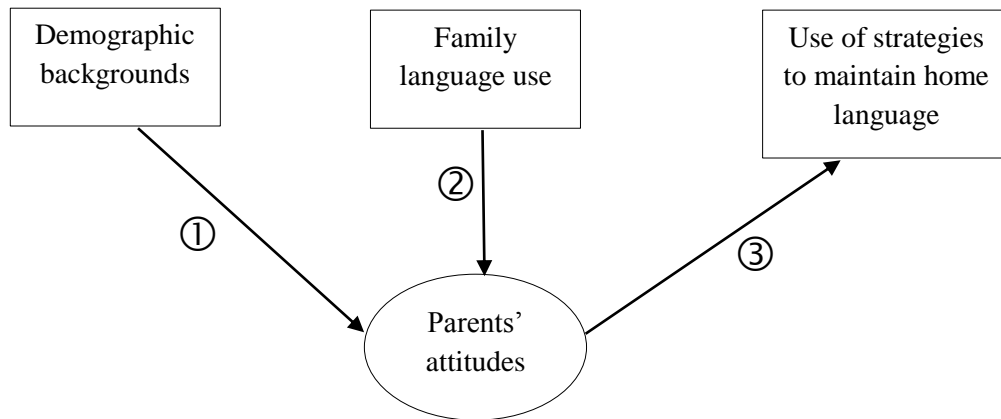
### **Peer Review Translation**

The online survey was written in English and translated to Chinese. I did the translations myself because I was originally from China and am proficient in reading and writing Mandarin Chinese. I also translated the consent form from English to Chinese. A collaborative translation was conducted with a colleague on all translated materials. The colleague, a postdoctoral fellow whose home language is Mandarin Chinese, finished a parallel translation between the English and Chinese version in collaboration with me. I initially brought both versions to my colleague; she sat with me for almost three hours to check the translation back and forth. At the end, she provided a written document which verified that the English and Chinese version of the survey and the consent form were equivalent. All participants completed the survey online. The survey was written in both English and Chinese; respondents could refer to both versions simultaneously when completing the survey.

## CHAPTER 4. RESULTS

### Analysis Plan

This study asked three research questions: (1) What is the relationship between family demographic background and parents' attitudes toward maintaining their children's home language; (2) What is the relationship between parents' attitudes toward maintaining children's home language and their use of home language with their children; and (3) What is the relationship between parents' attitudes toward maintaining their children's home language and their use of strategies to support children's home language learning? Descriptive results of the survey questions will be reported in the following paragraph. An analysis model (see Figure 2) was designed for testing the theoretical constructs including parents' attitudes toward maintaining children's home language and family language use (see Figure 1). Although family demographic information was not listed as one of the construct, it was still important to consider the relationship between parents' attitudes and their demographics, which became the first research question. Also, the relationship between parents' attitudes and family language use were tested as the second research question. Last, the relationship between parents' attitudes and parents' use of strategies to maintain children's home language were tested as the third research question. Chi-square analyses were conducted for the first and the second research questions because all independent (demographic information and home language use) and dependent variables (parents' attitudes) were categorical. ANOVA analysis was chosen for the third research question since the independent variable (groups of attitude score) was categorical and the dependent variable (number of strategies) was continuous.



*Figure 2. Analysis model.*

## **Descriptive Analyses**

### **Home Language Use**

Results showed that parents reported the majority of the children were learning to listen and speak in their home language; 63% of children were learning how to read and 51% of children were learning how to write, while 56% of parents were teaching their children about Chinese culture (see Table 2). The majority of the respondents spent most of the time communicating with their children in their home language, and the children also communicated most often with their parents in their home language. None of the parents reported that they never communicated with their children in their home language even though their children had never initiated communication with them in their home language. Parents reported that children used their home language mostly at home (97.9%) and with friends and family outside of home (54.1%), and only a small portion of parents reported that their children use their home language at their school (5.6%) or Chinese weekend school (5.6%). When children talked to their parents in English, a third of the parents answered in either English or their home language and a third of the parents answered in their home language. Fewer than 30% of the parents would remind their



child to use their home language, and only a few parents would answer their children in English. More than half of the parents reported that their children watched some TV or video programs in their home language at home. Above half of the families reported that they had more than 10 children's books in their home language at home (see Table 2).

Table 2

*Home Language Use*

Survey Question	N	%
Primary language parents speak with their children at home		
Mandarin Chinese	427	89.1
Cantonese	8	1.7
English	28	5.8
Other	16	3.3
Home language programs (videos, TV shows) children watch at home		
All programs	29	6.1
Most programs	139	29.0
Some programs	230	48.0
None	77	16.1
Children's home language books in their U.S. home		
None	32	6.7
1-5	91	19.0
5-10	71	14.8
More than 10	283	59.1
None	11	2.3
Places children use their home language		
Home	469	97.9
With friends and family outside of home	259	54.1
Child care/after school program	78	16.3
Community and recreation programs	56	11.7

Table 2. (Continued)

Survey Question	N	%
Religious center	44	9.2
School	27	5.6
Chinese class/Chinese weekend school	27	5.6
Other	8	1.7
Parents' respond when children talk to them in English		
Answer in my home language	145	30.3
Answer in English	40	8.4
Answer in either language	165	34.4
Remind my child to use home language	122	25.5
Ways children are learning their home language		
Listening	460	96.0
Speaking	451	94.2
Reading	305	63.7
Writing	247	51.6
Chinese culture exploration	271	56.6
None of the above	9	1.9

### Parents' Attitudes and Beliefs Toward Maintaining Their Children's Home Language

Almost all parents agreed that it would be important to teach their children their home language and none of the parents strongly disagreed with this statement (see Table 3). The majority of parents (79%) agreed that their children needed to know about their home language in order to maintain their home culture; however, 12% of parents either disagreed or strongly disagreed with this. According to parents' attitudes toward the statement "I believe my child must learn our home language in order to have an advantage in the future job market," some parents agreed strongly that their children must learn their home language, some parents have neutral opinion with this statement, and only a few people disagreed with it. Because only a few

parents who chose neutral, disagreed, or strongly disagreed with all of the three attitude questions, I combined “neutral,” “disagree,” and “strongly disagree” for the first research question regarding family demographic information; and I combined “disagree” and “strongly disagree” for the second research question regarding parents and children’s home language use.

Table 3

*Parents’ Attitudes toward Maintaining Children’s Home Language*

Survey Question	N	%
<b>It is important to teach children their home language</b>		
Strongly agree	405	84.6
Agree	53	11.1
Neither agree nor disagree	18	3.8
Disagree	3	.6
<b>Children should learn their home language to maintain their home culture</b>		
Strongly agree	185	38.6
Agree	189	39.5
Neither agree nor disagree	60	12.5
Disagree	27	5.6
Strongly disagree	18	3.8
<b>Children must learn their home language to have an advantage in the future job market</b>		
Strongly agree	160	33.8
Agree	137	28.6
Neither agree nor disagree	148	30.9
Disagree	22	4.6
Strongly disagree	10	2.1

### **Strategies and Resources Parents Use to Maintain Their Children's Home Language**

Parents were provided a list of eight possible strategies they might use to help their children learn and use their home language (See Table 4). Among the eight strategies, over half of the parents used between one and five strategies to maintain their children's home language. The most frequently reported strategy was for the parents to take their children to visit their home country in order to maintain their children's home language; a large majority also chose using media, reading Chinese books, and letting their children to talk to relatives and friends to maintain their home language. Some parents also taught their children about their home culture and took their children to weekend Chinese school to learn their home language. In addition, a very few (11) parents reported that they have taught their children home language by themselves, and three parents indicated their children are enrolled in bilingual school (see Table 4).

### **Support Parents Received to Maintain Their Children's Home Language**

The survey contained two questions that asked where parents got support and resources to maintain their children's home language and how satisfied they were with the support. The majority of the people sought support from their family members, either living in U.S. or outside of U.S., some families also used friends and Chinese community or cultural groups to seek home language support. A few people used Chinese church and their child's school to seek support. Sixty-three percent of parents reported they were satisfied with the support and resources to maintain their children's home language, and only 6% of the respondents dissatisfied or strongly dissatisfied with the resources they used (see Table 4).

### **Challenge for Maintaining Home Language**

The majority (49%) of parents reported that their biggest challenge in maintaining their children's home language was the lack of opportunities to use their home language. Some

parents also reported that they did not have community support or programs available. Another 13% of parents reported that their children were not interested in learning Chinese. Nine parents indicated that Chinese was hard for their children to learn. A few parents mentioned that Chinese and Western “thinking style” are very different, and the overwhelming American culture and values have prevented their children to learn Chinese. One parent even particularly said that his/her child was discriminated against on the basis being Chinese, therefore the child lost interest in keeping her Chinese identity (see Table 4).

Table 4

*Parents’ Experiences in Maintaining Children’s Home Language*

Survey Questions	N	%
<b>Strategies parents use for maintaining their children’s home language</b>		
Visit home country	350	73.1
Visit with other Chinese speaking relatives or friends	311	64.9
Teach child about home culture	310	64.7
Watch media	295	61.6
Attend Chinese cultural groups	270	56.4
Read Chinese books, newspapers, magazines	269	56.2
Attend weekend Chinese school	230	48.0
Home language tutor by parent him/herself	11	2.3
Bilingual school	3	0.6
Other	3	0.6
<b>Places parents seek support/resources to maintain their children’s home language</b>		
Family members	419	87.5
Friends	262	54.7
Chinese community or cultural groups	229	47.8
Chinese church	60	12.5
Child’s school	69	14.4
Chinese school	17	3.5

Table 4. (Continued)

Survey Questions	N	%
Media	12	2.5
Other places	7	1.5
Challenges parents face for maintaining children's home language		
Lack of chance to use home language	235	49.1
No community support or programs available	99	20.7
Child is not interested	64	13.4
No time for tutoring my child	38	7.9
Chinese is hard to learn	9	1.9
Parents' satisfaction toward the support/resources they received to maintain their children's home language		
Strongly satisfied	66	13.8
Satisfied	229	47.8
Neutral	142	29.6
Dissatisfied	24	5.0
Strongly dissatisfied	5	.0
Other	16	3.3

### **Relations Among Families' Attitudes Toward Maintaining Children's Home Language and Demographic Backgrounds**

#### **Variables Remodeling**

Chi-square analyses were conducted to examine the relations among family demographic information and parents' attitudes toward the importance of teaching their home language, the relation to maintain their home culture, and the relation to the future job market. The descriptive results showed that only a few respondents had less than a college education (see Table 1).

Therefore, parents (both father and mother) were grouped into 3 categories in education level: respondents with elementary and high school education were grouped together; those with some

college and a bachelor's degree were grouped together, and those with more than a bachelor's were grouped together. In addition, only a small number of respondents had lived in the U.S. for less than 5 years, so those were combined with the respondents who had lived in the U.S. for 5 to 10 years. Similar to variables "Long-term plan in the U.S." and "Family income," categories "less than 5 years" and "5-10 years" were grouped together, categories "<\$15,000" and "\$15,000-\$35,000" were grouped together, and categories "\$35,000-\$55,000" and "\$55,000-\$75,000" were grouped.

The first research question examined the relations between families' demographic backgrounds and their attitudes toward maintaining their home language. Chi-square analyses were conducted between family demographic information and parents' attitudes toward maintaining their children's home language (see Table 5). The results showed that there was an association between mother and father's education levels and parents' attitudes toward teaching their children their home language ( $\chi^2(4) = 23.18, p < .001$ ). The results indicated that mothers and fathers who had high school education level or lower had a moderate level of agreement with the importance of teaching their children their home language. However, because only a few parents had high school education or lower, this conclusion cannot be considered reliable.

The length of time parents had lived in the U.S. also was associated with their attitudes toward teaching their children their home language ( $\chi^2(4) = 10.56, p = .032$ ). Parents who had lived in the U.S. for 15 to 20 years tended to agree less strongly that it is important to teach their children their home language. Families' long-term plan did not have an association with parents' attitude toward teaching their children's home language, which meant that parents attitudes regarding teaching children home language did not vary based on their plan of staying in the U.S. In addition, family income was associated with parents' attitude toward teaching their children's

home language. Families who had lower incomes (below \$35,000) agreed, but not strongly that it was important for them to teach their children their home language.

Table 5

*Family Demographic Information and Parents' Attitudes Regarding Importance of Teaching Their Children Home Language*

Variable	Strongly agree		Agree		Neutral to strongly agree		$\chi^2$
	N	%	N	%	N	%	
Mother's education level							18.05**
Elementary to high school	6	1.3	6	1.3	1	.2	
Some college/BS/BA	90	18.8	10	2.1	5	1	
Graduate school/graduate degree	309	64.6	36	7.5	15	3.1	
Father's education level							23.18***
Elementary to high school	7	1.5	7	1.5	2	.4	
Some college/BS/BA	38	8.0	2	.4	1	.2	
Graduate school/graduate degree	358	75.1	44	9.2	18	3.8	
Years in the U.S.							10.56*
0-10	165	34.7	22	4.6	4	.8	
10-15	169	35.5	20	4.2	7	1.5	
15-20	69	14.5	11	2.3	9	1.9	
Long-term plan to stay in the U.S.							4.01
0-10 years	15	3.1	4	.8	0	0	
More than 10 years	304	63.7	41	8.6	18	3.8	
Not sure	84	17.6	8	1.7	3	.6	
Family income							15.48*
\$0-\$35,000	21	4.5	8	1.7	0	0	



Table 5. (Continued)

\$35,000-\$75,000	50	10.6	4	.9	5	1.1
\$75,000-\$95,000	43	9.1	5	1.1	0	0
<\$95,000	286	60.9	32	6.8	16	3.4

\* $p < .05$ , \*\* $p < .01$ , \*\*\* $p < .001$

Chi-square analysis was conducted between family demographic information and parents' attitude toward whether or not children should learn their home language in order to maintain their home culture (see Table 6). The results showed that parents' attitudes regarding whether or not their children should know their home language in order to maintain their home culture was associated with mother's education level and father's education level ( $\chi^2(4) = 11.56$ ,  $p = .021$ ;  $\chi^2(4) = 17.57$ ,  $p = .002$  respectively). Parents reported that fathers who had a Bachelor's degree had less positive attitude (neutral, disagree or strongly disagree) when asked if their children should learn their home language in order to maintain their home culture. However, fathers who had a graduate education agreed strongly that their children has to learn their home language so that their home culture can be maintained.

Table 6

*Family Demographic Information and Parents' Attitudes Regarding Whether Children Should Learn Their Home Language in order to Maintain Their Home Culture*

Variable	Strongly agree		Agree		Neutral to strongly agree		$\chi^2$
	N	%	N	%	N	%	
Mother's education level							11.56*
Elementary to high school	0	0	6	1.3	7	1.5	
Some college/BS/BA	41	8.6	42	8.8	22	4.6	
Graduate school/graduate degree	144	30.1	140	29.3	76	15.9	
Father's education level							17.57**
Elementary to high school	0	0	9	1.9	7	1.5	
Some college/BS/BA	10	2.1	17	3.6	14	2.9	
Graduate school/graduate degree	175	36.7	161	33.8	84	17.6	
Years in the U.S.							8.16
0-10	70	14.7	82	17.2	39	8.2	
10-15	85	17.9	75	15.8	36	7.6	
15-20	29	6.1	32	6.7	28	5.9	
Long-term plan in the U.S.							3.91
0-10 years	5	1.0	9	1.9	5	1.0	
More than 10 years	135	28.3	146	30.6	85	17.2	
Not sure	44	9.2	33	6.9	18	3.8	
Family income							7.62
\$0-\$35,000	8	1.7	12	2.6	9	1.9	
\$35,000-\$75,000	21	4.5	29	6.2	9	1.9	
\$75,000-\$95,000	21	4.5	21	4.5	6	1.3	
<\$95,000	133	28.3	126	26.8	75	16.0	

\* $p < .05$ , \*\* $p < .01$ , \*\*\* $p < .001$

Chi-square analysis was conducted between family demographic information and parents' attitude regarding whether or not their children must learn their home language in order to have an advantage in the future job market. The results showed that none of the family demographic information was significantly associated with the above statement (see Table 7).

Table 7

*Family Demographic Information and Parents' Attitudes Regarding Whether Children Must Learn Their Home Language in order to Have an Advantage in the Future Job Market*

Variable	Strongly agree		Agree		Neutral to strongly agree		$\chi^2$
	N	%	N	%	N	%	
Mother's education level							8.8
Elementary to high school	3	.6	4	.8	6	1.3	
Some college/BS/BA	48	10.0	24	5.0	33	6.9	
Graduate school/graduate degree	111	23.2	108	22.6	141	29.5	
Father's education level							1.43
Elementary to high school	7	1.5	5	1	4	.8	
Some college/BS/BA	15	3.1	11	2.3	15	3.1	
Graduate school/graduate degree	139	29.1	121	25.4	160	33.5	
Years in the U.S.							6.06
0-10	76	16.0	50	10.5	65	13.7	
10-15	59	12.4	62	13	75	15.8	
15-20	26	5.5	24	5	39	8.2	
Long-term plan in the U.S.							3.87
0-10 years	9	1.9	5	1	5	1.0	
More than 10 years	114	23.9	106	22.2	143	30.0	

Table 7. (Continued)

Not sure	37	7.8	26	5.5	32	6.7
Family income						5.11
\$0-\$35,000	9	1.9	11	2.3	9	1.9
\$35,000-\$75,000	23	4.9	11	2.3	25	5.3
\$75,000-\$95,000	13	2.8	15	3.2	20	4.3
<\$95,000	113	24	96	20.4	125	26.6

\* $p < .05$ , \*\* $p < .01$ , \*\*\* $p < .001$

### **Relations Among Families' Attitudes Toward Maintaining Children's Home Language and Parents and Children's Use of Home Language**

The second research question examined if parents' attitudes toward maintaining home language affected the use of home language for the parents and children. Chi-square analysis was conducted between home language use and parents' attitudes regarding how important they thought it was to teach their children their home language. The results showed that family's primary language, parent's communication with child in home language, child's communication with parent in home language, parent's response when child speaks with the parent in English, programs child watches in home language, and children's books in home language, all had an association with parent's attitude toward it would be important to teach their children home language (see Table 8). Specifically, parents whose primary language was Chinese indicated strong levels of agreement that it would be important for them to teach their children home language. However, parents whose primary language was English agreed less strongly, and were more neutral or disagreed with the above statement. Additionally, parents who communicated with their children in their home language all the time strongly agreed that it would be important to teach their home language; whereas parents who sometimes communicated with their children in home language less strongly agreed.

According to children's home language use with their parents, parents reported that parents whose children communicated with them in their home language all the time strongly agreed that it would be important to teach their child the home language. However, parents whose children seldom communicated with their parents in their home language still agreed, but less strongly with the above statement. In addition, when the child talks to the parents in English, parents who answered their children in English less strongly agreed, but had moderate agreements regarding it would be important to teach my child home language. Parents who answered their children in either home language or English agreed, but not strongly with this statement. Parents who would remind their children to use their home language had strong agreements toward the above statement.

Parents whose children watched most video and TV programs in their home language more strongly agreed that it would be important to teach their child home language (See Table 8). Parents whose children watched some of the programs in their home language were more neutral toward the above statement. Parents whose children watched nothing in their home language were more disagreed toward the above statement. According to the number of children's books in home language parents had at home, parents who did not have any children's books in their home language had neutral opinions believing it would be important to teach their children home language. However, parents who had more than 10 children's books at home had strong agreements that it would be important to teach their children home language.

Table 8

*Chi-square Analysis between Parents and Children's Home Language Use and Parents'*

*Attitudes Regarding Whether It is Important to Teach Their Children Home Language*

Variable	Strongly agree		Agree		Neutral		Disagree/strongly disagree		$\chi^2$
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	
Primary language									52.55***
Mandarin Chinese	386	80.6	45	9.4	10	2.1	2	.4	
English	13	2.7	7	1.5	7	1.5	1	.2	
Mixed languages	6	1.3	1	.2	1	.2	0	0	
Parent's communication with child in home language									81.05***
All the time	199	41.5	13	2.7	3	.6	1	.2	
Most of the time	186	38.8	31	6.5	6	1.3	0	0	
Sometimes	14	2.9	8	1.7	7	1.5	1	.2	
Very little time	6	1.3	1	.2	2	.4	1	.2	
Child's communication in home language									65.40***
All the time	128	27.0	9	1.9	2	.4	1	.2	
Most of the time	173	36.5	20	4.2	5	1.1	0	0	
Sometimes	71	15.0	9	1.9	2	.4	0	0	
Very little time	23	4.9	12	2.5	6	1.3	2	.4	
None	6	1.3	2	.4	3	.6	0	0	
Parent's response when child talks in English									37.59***
Answer in my home language	127	26.9	14	3	4	.8	0	0	
Answer in English	26	5.5	9	1.9	3	.6	2	.4	
Answer in either language	129	27.3	25	5.3	10	2.1	1	.2	

Table 8. (Continued)

Remind my child to use home language	116	24.6	5	1.1	1	.2	0	0	
Program child watches in home language									30.97***
All of them	27	5.7	1	.2	1	.2	0	0	
Most of them	128	26.9	11	2.3	0	0	0	0	
Some of them	189	39.8	28	5.9	13	2.7	0	0	
None	57	12.0	13	2.7	4	.8	3	.6	
Number of children's books in home language									40.07***
None	17	3.6	10	2.1	4	.8	1	.2	
1-5	78	16.4	9	1.9	4	.8	0	0	
5-10	55	11.5	12	2.5	2	.4	2	.4	
More than 10	253	53.0	22	4.6	8	1.7	0	0	

. \* $p < .05$ , \*\* $p < .01$ , \*\*\* $p < .001$

Chi-square analysis was conducted between home language use and parents' attitudes regarding their children should learn their home language in order to maintain their home culture (see Table 9). The results showed that family's primary language, parent's communication with child in home language, child's communication with parent in home language, parent's response when child speak with the parent in English, and programs child watches in home language, all had an association with parent's attitude toward their children should learn their home language in order to maintain their home culture. Specifically, parents whose primary language was Chinese had high levels of agreements believing their children should learn their home language in order to maintain their home culture. Parents who communicated with their child in their home language all the time more strongly agreed believing their children should learn their home language in order to maintain their home culture.

According to children's home language use with their parents, parents whose children communicated with them in their home language all the time also had strong opinion that their

children should learn their home language in order to maintain their home culture. However, parents whose children sometimes communicate with their parents in home language had neutral opinion toward this statement. In addition, when the child talks to the parents in English, parents who answered their children in their home language had strong beliefs that their children should learn their home language so that their home culture can be maintained. Parents who answered their children in either home language or English less strongly agreed with the above statement. Parents who would remind their children to use their home language agreed strongly toward the above statement.

According to the programs (video, TV shows) that children watch at home, parents whose children watched most of the programs in their home language agreed strongly that children should learn their home language in order to maintain their home culture. Parents whose children watched nothing in their home language were more neutral toward the above statement. At the end, the chi-square analysis showed that the number of children's books in home language parents had at home did not have an association with parent's attitude toward if their children should learn their home language in order to maintain their home culture (See Table 9).



Table 9

*Chi-square Analysis between Parents and Children's Home Language Use and Parents' Attitudes regarding Children Should Learn Their Home Language in order to Maintain Their Home Culture*

Variable	Strongly agree		Agree		Neutral		Disagree/strongly disagree		$\chi^2$
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	
Primary language									27.57***
Mandarin Chinese	177	37.0	180	37.6	52	10.9	34	7.1	
English	6	1.3	7	1.5	7	1.5	8	1.7	
Mixed languages	2	.4	2	.4	1	.2	3	.6	
Parent's communication with child in home language									45.39***
All the time	100	20.9	84	17.5	15	3.1	17	3.5	
Most of the time	76	15.9	96	20.0	34	7.1	17	3.5	
Sometimes	7	1.5	5	1.0	8	1.7	10	2.1	
Very little time	2	.4	4	.8	3	.6	1	.2	
Child's communication in home language									48.93***
All the time	73	15.4	49	10.3	5	1.1	13	2.7	
Most of the time	75	15.8	86	18.1	25	5.3	12	2.5	
Sometimes	19	4	36	7.6	20	4.2	7	1.5	
Very little time	13	2.7	15	3.2	6	1.3	9	1.9	
None	3	.6	2	.4	4	.8	2	.4	
Parent's response when child talks in English									28.04**
Answer in my home language	67	14.2	56	11.9	13	2.8	9	1.9	
Answer in English	9	1.9	16	3.4	7	1.5	8	1.7	
Answer in either language	47	10.0	71	15.0	25	5.5	21	4.4	

Table 9. (Continued)

Remind my child to use home language	59	12.5	43	9.1	14	3.0	6	1.3	
Program child watches in home language									25.18**
All of them	13	2.7	10	2.1	0	0	6	1.3	
Most of them	66	13.9	54	11.4	9	1.9	10	2.1	
Some of them	81	17.1	96	20.2	34	7.2	19	4.0	
None	23	4.8	29	6.1	17	3.6	8	1.7	
Number of children's books in home language									15.07
None	10	2.1	10	2.1	9	1.9	3	.6	
1-5	33	6.9	38	8.0	15	3.1	5	1.0	
5-10	24	5.0	29	6.1	11	2.3	7	1.5	
More than 10	117	24.5	111	23.3	25	5.2	30	6.3	

\* $p < .05$ , \*\* $p < .01$ , \*\*\* $p < .001$

Chi-square analysis was conducted between parents and children's home language use and parents' attitudes toward if their children must learn their home language in order to have an advantage in the future job market (see Table 10). According to the results, only the programs that the child watched at home in home language had an association with the above statement ( $\chi^2(9) = 37.59, p < .001$ ). Parents whose children watched all of the programs or most of the programs in their home language all had strong agreements that their children must learn their home language in order to have an advantage in the future job market. Parents whose children watched some of the programs in their home language less strongly agreed, but more neutral toward the above statement.

Table 10

*Chi-square Analysis between Parents and Children's Home Language Use and Parents' Attitudes regarding whether Children Must Learn Their Home Language in order to Have An Advantage in the Future Job Market*

Variable	Strongly agree		Agree		Neutral		Disagree/strongly disagree		$\chi^2$
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	
Primary language									9.45
Chinese	156	32.6	126	26.3	132	27.6	29	6.1	
English	4	.8	10	2.1	11	2.3	3	.6	
Mixed languages	2	.4	1	.2	5	1.0	0	0	
Parent's communication with child in home language									14.70
All the time	86	18.0	54	11.3	64	13.4	12	2.5	
Most of the time	69	14.4	73	15.2	66	13.8	15	3.1	
Sometimes	4	.8	8	1.7	14	2.9	4	.8	
Very little time	3	.6	2	.4	4	.8	1	.2	
Child's communication in home language									16.44
All the time	55	11.6	40	8.4	36	7.6	9	1.9	
Most of the time	74	15.6	56	11.8	56	11.8	12	2.5	
Sometimes	19	4.0	27	5.7	29	6.1	7	1.5	
Very little time	8	1.7	13	2.7	18	3.8	4	.8	
None	5	1.1	1	.2	5	1.1	0	0	
Parent's response when child talks in English									13.39
Answer in my home language	61	12.9	37	7.8	41	8.7	6	1.3	
Answer in English	9	1.9	14	3.0	13	2.8	4	.8	
Answer in either language	46	9.7	52	11.0	51	10.8	16	3.4	

Table 10. (Continued)

Remind my child to use home language	45	9.5	32	6.8	39	8.3	6	1.3
Program child watches in home language								37.59***
All of them	16	3.4	5	1.1	6	1.3	2	.4
Most of them	68	14.3	35	7.4	34	7.2	2	.4
Some of them	57	12.0	72	15.2	82	17.3	19	4.0
None	19	4.0	25	5.3	24	5.1	9	1.9
Number of children's books in home language								8.88
None	11	2.3	10	2.1	10	2.1	1	.2
1-5	31	6.5	25	5.2	32	6.7	3	.6
5-10	21	4.4	28	5.9	18	3.8	4	.8
More than 10	97	20.3	74	15.5	88	18.4	24	5.0

\* $p < .05$ , \*\* $p < .01$ , \*\*\* $p < .001$

#### Parent's Home Language Use vs. Child's Home Language Use

A chi-square analysis was conducted between parents' communication with their children in home language and the children's communication with parents in their home language on a daily basis (see Table 11). The result indicated that there was an association between parents' and children's home language use ( $\chi^2(12) = 398.4, p < .001$ ). Children were more likely to talk to their parents in their home language when their parents frequently communicated with them in their home language; whereas, when parents had a low rate of communicating with their children in home language, their children also had low rate of communication in home language with their parents. Therefore, the results indicated that the amount of time children communicated with their parents in their home language was equal to or less than how much the parents communicated with the children in their home language. Parents did not tend to report that the children ever communicated more in the home language.

Table 11

*Chi-square Analysis between Parents' and Children's Home Language Use*

Parents' home language use with their children on a daily basis	Children's home language use with their parents on a daily basis										$\chi^2$	p value
	All the time		Most of the time		Sometimes		Very little time		None			
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%		
All the time	133	28.1	69	14.6	6	1.3	3	.6	2	.4	398.4	<.001
Most of the time	7	1.5	129	27.2	66	13.9	15	3.2	4	.8		
Sometimes	0	0	0	0	10	2.1	17	3.5	3	.6		
Very little time	0	0	0	0	0	0	8	1.7	2	.4		

**Relations Among Strategies Families Use to Maintain Children's Home Language and Families' Attitudes Toward Maintaining Children's Home Language**

The third research question examined if parents with different attitudes toward home language used different strategies to support children's language learning. ANOVA analysis was conducted between the number of strategies the families use and parents' overall attitude level (sum of scores of three attitude questions) about maintaining their children's home language (see Table 12). The attitude scores, which ranged from 3-13 were summed. Three was the highest score possible, which meant the family strongly agreed with all three attitude questions; the lowest score was 13 which meant the family either disagreed or strongly disagreed with all three questions. The sum of the attitude scores were then grouped into 3 groups: strongly agree, agree, neutral to disagree because changing a continuous variable into a categorical variable is required for ANOVA analysis for this research question. Since the variable "number of strategies" is a continuous variable, the variable "sum of attitudes" needs to be categorical in order to fulfill ANOVA analysis requirement that the independent variable be categorical. Families who scored

3-4 were in the strongly agree group, families who scored 5-6 were in the agree group, and families who scored 7-13 were in the neutral to disagree group. Families who were in the strongly agree group used more strategies than families in the agree ( $M_D = .43, p = .026$ ) and the neutral to disagree groups ( $M_D = .57; p = .011$ ). This result meant that families who strongly agreed that it was important to teach their children in their home language, their children need to learn their home language in order to maintain their home culture, as well as their children need to learn home language in order to get an advantage in the future job market used more strategies to maintain their children's home language than the other two groups. Chi-square analysis was also conducted between each of the strategies and the categories of sum of parents' attitudes (see Table 13). A significant result was only shown between strategy of reading Chinese books and the category of sum of parents' attitudes ( $\chi^2(2) = 9.20, p = .01$ ). In particular, families who were in the strongly agree group were more likely to read Chinese books, newspapers, and magazines to maintain children's home language, and families who were in the neutral to disagree group were less likely to read Chinese books, newspapers, and magazines to their children.

Table 12

*ANOVA Analysis between Number of Strategies Families Use to Support Children's Home Language Learning and Parents' attitudes toward Maintaining Children's Home Language*

<i>Groups by attitude toward home language</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>DF</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>p</i>
Strongly agree	177	4.68	2	4.05	.018
Agree	181	4.25			
Neutral to disagree	110	4.11			

Table 13

*Chi-square Analysis between Categories of Sum of Parents' Attitudes and Whether or Not*

*Parents Read Chinese Materials to Maintain Children's Home Language*

Categories of Sum of attitudes	Whether or not families read Chinese books, newspapers, and magazines to maintain children's home language				$\chi^2$	<i>p</i>
	Yes		No			
	N	%	N	%		
Strongly agree	111	23.2	68	14.2	9.2	.010
Agree	108	22.5	79	16.5		
Neutral to disagree	50	10.4	63	13.2		

## CHAPTER 5. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

The purpose of this study was to examine Chinese parents' attitudes and strategies of maintaining their children's home language while living in the United States. Participants were recruited through an online survey. Most parents had positive opinions toward the importance of maintaining their children's home language in relation to keep their home culture and getting an advantage in the future job market; however, other varying opinions will also be discussed in the following paragraph.

The majority of the study participants had higher education level and higher family income than typical population in the U.S. According to 2008 American Community Survey, 50% people of Asian descent<sup>1</sup> who are 25 and older have a bachelor's or higher degree, compared to 28% for all Americans who are 25 and older (U.S. Census Bureau, 2014). According to 2006-2010 American Community Survey Briefs (Ogunwole, Drewery, & Rios-Vargas, 2012), the percentage of Chinese people who are 25 and older with a bachelor's degree or higher is 51.8%. In addition, 20% Asians living in the United States who are 25 and older have a graduate or professional degree, compared to 10% for all Americans who are 25 and older. The median household income for single-race Asians is \$70,069 in 2008, and the result in this study showed that the average family income among Chinese families was between \$75,000 and \$95,000 and the median was above \$95,000. Therefore, even though the majority of the participants from this study were highly educated and 70% earned more than \$95,000 per year, the result was representative for those Chinese Americans who have a bachelor's degree or higher, and who are living in the United States.

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<sup>1</sup> This refers to people of Asian descent from one specific country (e.g., from China or Korea).



The first research question examined parents' attitudes toward maintaining their children's home language based on their different demographic backgrounds. The results revealed that the majority of the parents believed it would be very important for them to teach their children home language and it was related to mother and father's education level. However, because only a few mothers and fathers had lower education levels (high school education or lower), the above results cannot generalize to all parents who had low education level and who were living in the United States. Families who have lived in the U.S. for 15 to 20 years had neutral agreement toward it would be important to teach their children home language. The reason might be that after living in the United States for a very long time period, parents might use less Chinese than English in their daily life, and therefore might not have a big motivation to teach their children home language. In addition, overall 79% parents believe that their children can't maintain their home culture without knowing their home language, and fathers with higher education level had a very strong agreement with this statement.

In the current study, 56% of parents were teaching their children about Chinese culture and 64% of parents were using teaching children about their home culture as a strategy to maintain their children's home language. Findings from the current study support previous research showing that maintaining a home language is related to maintaining a home culture, and children can become both linguistically and culturally competent adults by learning their home language (Cunningham-Andersson & Andersson, 2011; Lutz, 2008). In my perspective, the benefits of maintaining Chinese as a home language can apply to other languages. Language programs should inform parents the benefits of maintaining one's home language and how it connects with their home culture, so that parents who speak minority languages can be motivated to support their children's home language learning.

Parents had differing beliefs regarding whether their children must learn home language in order to have an advantage in the future job market. Over half of the parents agreed with it, but 30% parents were neutral toward this statement. Experts have suggested that people who can read, write and speak in two or more languages can have a big advantage in the job market (Zelasko & Antunez, 2000). A qualitative study with Chinese parents also showed they believe children can get an advantage in a global Asian job market if they have good Chinese language skills (Wu, 2005). Korean immigrants to the U.S. report that they believe proficiency in Korean language would give them benefits in pursuing their careers, particularly in Korean community (Cho, 2000). Therefore, the results of this study echo with the previous research which shows that obtaining home language acquisition is viewed as giving Chinese people benefits in pursuing their future careers. Chinese parents should encourage and support their children to learn about their home language, Chinese language schools and dual language programs should also provide information regarding the benefits of acquiring a working knowledge of Chinese. However, since a lot of these reports are opinions of experts, parents, and individual immigrants, more research is needed to discover if this actually has an impact on their competitiveness in the job market.

The second research question examined if parents' attitudes toward maintaining home language affect the use of home language for the parents and children. The results showed that there was an association between home language use and parents' attitude toward maintaining their children's home language. Parents whose primary language was Chinese strongly agreed that it would be important to teach their children home language and they also believed their children should learn their home language in order to maintain their home culture; however, parents whose primary language was English had a moderate agreement with the importance of

teaching children home language, but they didn't strongly agree that their children should learn their home language in order to maintain their home culture. It is not surprising to know that parents who often communicate with their children in their home language believed it would be important to teach their children home language, and they also regarded home language was in relation to home culture. When children talked to parents in English, parents who reminded their children to use their home language agreed more strongly with the importance of maintaining their children's home language and indicated learning home language was related to maintain their home culture. This echoes with previous research that if one has a positive attitude toward his or her home language, the person will take efforts to learn and maintain it (Zhang & Slaughter-Defoe, 2009).

The results also indicate that parents' attitudes toward maintaining their children's home language also affect the programs (video, TV shows) that children watched and books they read at home. This suggested that if parents had strong attitudes toward maintaining their children's home language, believing it would affect the maintenance of home culture and their children's career in the future, they would provide their children opportunities to watch more programs in their home language or read more Chinese books. This results have not been found by previous researchers; however, researchers have shown whether or not television viewing can be a predictor for home language development. Cho and Krashen (2000) report that watching television can predict Korean adults' Korean language proficiency. However, Patterson (2002) suggest television watching cannot predict Spanish-English bilingual toddlers' language skills, but parent-child book reading can predict children's both Spanish and English language skills. Therefore, it is suggested that watching television may not promote young children's language development, but may help older children and adults to develop their language skills (Dixon et

al., 2012). More research should be done with families whose home language is Chinese to see how watching different media and reading books to children promote or hinder their home language development.

In addition, results also show that parents' home language use was related to children's home language use as the more parents communicate with their children in their home language, the more likely their children would communicate with them in their home language. Overall, the above results reflect previous research studies that parents' beliefs toward home language use are related to their behavior toward their children, which will also have an impact on children's language use. De Houwer (1998) suggests that bilingual parents' beliefs and attitudes have a direct result to their linguistic behavior towards their children. Additionally, De Houwer (1998) also reported that it is well accepted that parents' beliefs toward home language maintenance can help determine their behavior of language use in crucial ways. He explains that parental beliefs and attitudes toward home language use can have an impact on parent behavior toward their children, which in turn acts as a powerful contributor in children's language use (De Houwer, 1998). Therefore, if parents want to maintain their children's home language, they are responsible for their children's home language learning and maintenance. If they do not use home language or lack the chance of using home language with their children, it is unlikely that their children will use home language or even value their home language.

The third research question examined if parents with different attitudes toward home language use different strategies to support children's language learning. The results showed that parents' attitude toward maintaining children's home language has an impact on the strategies they use to maintain children's home language. As De Houwer (1998) indicates parents' attitudes and beliefs toward language choice can determine their interactional strategies when they talk to

their children. The results indicated that families who reported strongly agreeing tend to use more strategies than families who reported lower levels of agreement. According to previous research regarding strategies parents have been using to maintain children's home language, parents use different strategies to maintain their children's home language, including take their children to a weekend Chinese school or teach them Chinese by themselves, use home language at home, reading Chinese books to their children and watch TV, videos in their home language, visit home country, and attend Chinese local cultural groups (Cunningham-Andersson & Andersson, 2011). The results from this study also reveal that the majority of the families are using the strategies that mentioned above with their children. In addition, three parents indicated in the "other" option of the strategies they use to maintain their children's home language that their children attended a Chinese-English bilingual school. This parent input was surprising for me because Chinese-English immersion school was not listed as one of the strategies and it is good to know that at least a few children who are living in the U.S. are attending these bilingual schools. Experts have suggested that dual language programs can foster bilingualism, and enhance the awareness of linguistic and cultural diversity. Children who are under instructions of two languages can achieve higher level of academic success (NDLC, 2011). Therefore, Chinese-English bilingual school and other dual language programs should be investigated further.

An overwhelming 87% of the families relied on family members, and half of the parents rely on their friends and Chinese cultural groups when seeking support and resources to maintain their children's home language. Not very many families sought support from the Chinese church, Chinese school and the media. This result is similar to the strategies that families use to maintain their children's home language, which indicates that most parents depend on informal networks that include their Chinese-speaking family members, relatives, friends, and cultural groups to

help them fulfill their goal before seeking resources from formal support. This is also consistent with what the research indicates that parents are more likely to be influenced by and seek support from informal sources such as families and friends, rather than formal support (Moore, Milligan, Rivas, & Goff, 2012).

Parents indicated that the biggest challenge they faced in maintaining children's home language was the lack of opportunities to use home language with their children. A few parents said Chinese is hard to learn, and therefore children lose interest. Only four families declared that they are not facing any challenges at all. The results reflect previous research that immigrant Chinese children exposed to the dominant English language and culture are much less likely to use their home language (Carol, 2009). Wu (2006) also indicates that children fail to see the connection between home language learning and their daily lives, and therefore lose interest. Although this study did not ask the parents if their children failed to see the connection between language learning and their everyday life, it could become a passive trend for these children for not knowing and value their home language as they grow up. One parent in this study indicated in the "other" option in the "challenge" question (regarding the biggest challenge families faced for maintaining their children's home language) that the overwhelming American society prevented her child to learn their home language, which echoes Fillmore (2000)'s study that immigrant Chinese children can become more Americanized as they grow up, they think their home language is unimportant and has no value to them, and they gradually loss the ability of using home language. Therefore, the society as a whole should emphasize the importance of learning a different language other than English and value the role of one's home language. For instance, local public schools should value students' language and culture. Teachers and staff in schools should convey the message to students their cultures are respected and valued (Zelasko

& Antunez, 2000). Teachers can talk with children whose first languages are not English that knowing and learning their home language is important. They can even also encourage children's parents to maintain their home language at home while learning English.

This study incorporated with family life course theory, which focused on family norms and family roles. Family language use and parents' attitudes toward home language learning represented family norms and family roles respectively, and were analyzed in each research question. Human capital theory was also included, which represented that parent's education level can affect parents' attitude toward children's home language maintenance. Parents' with higher education levels more strongly believed that it would be important to teach their children home language, they also had a stronger commitment to the belief that their children needed to learn home language to maintain their home culture, as well as learn their home language in order to get an advantage in future job market. Parents with higher education levels also used more strategies to maintain their children's home language compared to parents with lower education levels. Social capital theory posits the effect of family relations on maintaining children's home language. This study investigated how parents used their family relationships to support as a context in which they would teach their children to use home language. Chinese parents tended to seek support from informal resources such as family members, friends, Chinese community or cultural groups than formal resources such as child's school or Chinese school. Parents also used building family relationships as a strategy to maintain children's home language, for example, the majority of parents brought their children to their home country, and visit other Chinese speaking relatives or friends to let their children experience home language. The fact that children used home language mostly at home, with friends and family outside of home compared to in child care program, school, or Chinese weekend school also reflected the

social capital theory concept that when children were making connections with family members and friends, they had the opportunity to learn their home language.

### **Limitations**

This study has some limitations. Although more than 500 participants were recruited, the majority of the participants had high levels of education and high levels of income; therefore, the result of this study can only represent the high SES Chinese families who are living in the United States. The majority of the participants were recruited through posting online surveys on Chinese websites, and it also eliminated the people who did not have access to internet or who did not have time to search online Chinese news. Additionally, I am living in a college town where most of the participants I personally contacted are having high education level, and they also passed on this survey to families who had higher education. Furthermore, I personally know there are some hard to reach Chinese communities in big cities in the U.S., which is similar to the situation that Fillmore (2000) explored in his study, which shows that in these Chinese communities, the parents are constantly striving to make money instead of caring for their children, let alone to say they would have time to teach their children home language or check some Chinese websites. In my perspective since I know these types of families in some big cities, those families might have very high income, but very low education level and therefore are hard to reach via the network. Moreover, the survey only posted on three Chinese websites, and no other English website for people to explore; thus, people who usually check on Chinese websites will have a preference of using Chinese. In the theoretical framework, family rules were listed as one of the sub-constructs, but the survey did not ask questions that were related to family rules. More studies can examine the importance of family rules on home language maintenance.

In addition to the recruitment process, the survey itself also has some issues. For instance, the survey did not consider families who have children that are too young to talk, which means



some of the questions cannot apply to these families. Due to the limitation of the number of survey questions, the relationship between parents and their children was not considered and we did not know how cohesive the parents were with their children. In addition, this survey relied on parent's report about how they used their home language with their children, no observations were conducted to check the validity of the parent's report. Further investigations can be made. Also, because only a few respondents reported that their home language was Cantonese, we cannot determine the difference on parents' attitudes toward maintaining home language between respondents who primarily spoke Mandarin Chinese and those who spoke Cantonese Chinese. Researchers can explore further on the difference of Chinese dialects on parents' attitudes toward maintaining their children's home language.

### **Future Research**

Because the majority of the participants in this study were from high SES Chinese families who are living in the United States, more research should be done with lower SES Chinese families. Since using an online survey can limit the people who don't have internet access, research should be done through mail or in person. More studies need to explore which strategy or if multiple strategies would be the most efficient or effective for parents to maintain their children's home language. More research can also be conducted regarding how knowing both Chinese and English help people in pursuing their career. A longitudinal or case study can be implemented as researchers follow people's lives as they grow up while learning their home language, and examine if they really have an advantage in the job market. Researchers can also conduct a comparison group with people who maintain their home language and people who do not, and see if there is any difference when they pursue jobs. Additionally, more research is needed about Chinese-English bilingual school or dual language programs to examine how these

programs and curriculum promote children's home language learning, as well as the strategies used to facilitate home language development.

Some research can also be done regarding the function of mass media and parent-child book reading to see how they affect Chinese children's home language learning. Researchers can observe in a real home setting and see what children can learn from the TV program/video, and book reading in their home language. In addition, in a home setting, research can observe how parents communicate with their children in their home language, such as the words they communicate with their children, and how cohesive the relationship is between the parent and the child.

### **Implications for Supporting Families**

Results from this study can be used to help parents reflect on their daily communication with their children in their home language or other languages. They can get a chance to reflect on their behaviors and their children's behaviors in learning and maintaining their home language, such as how much time they spend time communicating with their children in home language and how their children communicate with their parents in home language. Parents can also learn about the effectiveness of the strategies they have been using for maintaining their children's home language. Some parents indicated in the survey that although their children were too young to talk, they have prepared to use the strategies that were listed in the survey in the future as children grew up. The result of this study can give families an overview of how Chinese families who are living in the U.S. view the importance of maintaining their children's home language, how parents do to support their children's home language learning and the challenges they face.

Since a lot of parents indicated they were lacking the support from the society to help them maintain their children's home language, more systematic ways can be developed for

Chinese families to help them get resources and materials in maintaining their children's home language. For instance, local Chinese language school can provide Chinese materials or resources in local Chinese community for parents to purchase or borrow. Professionals that are interested in maintaining home language can also develop applications or software that can facilitate children's language learning. Parents can also seek support and resources from Chinese people around them who are in the same goal of maintaining children's home language. Chinese parents can share experience, resources, and express feelings with each other to acknowledge and encourage their efforts in maintaining children's home language. In addition, because children indicate that Chinese is hard to learn, professionals can discover more efficient and technical ways for Chinese immigrant children to learn their home language and culture; Chinese school also needs to implement more useful and effective strategies and techniques to improve children's home language skills. Chinese parents can also consider sending their children to Chinese-English bilingual/immersion school if programs in the local are available. More importantly, in order to let Chinese children value their home language or take efforts to maintain their home language, the mainstream public school can provide credits for language courses that children take at local Chinese language school. In this way, children can be motivated in learning their home language, and it will also connect the relationship between public school and local language school (Zhang & Slaughter-Defoe, 2009).

### **Conclusion**

This purpose of the study was to investigate Chinese parents' attitudes and strategies of maintaining their children's home language while staying in the United States. More than 500 respondents filled out an online survey and data from 479 were included in the final analysis. The result shows that overwhelming number of participants had high levels of education and

family income; therefore, the majority of the respondents had a very strong agreement that it would be important for them to teach their children their home language. However, not all parents believed that their children should learn their home language so that their home culture could be maintained. Also, parents had different opinions regarding if knowing their home language would help their children to get advantage in the future job market. Parents reported that they used different strategies to support their children maintain their home language, and at the same time, they also face challenges when they try to support their children's language learning.

Only a few studies about maintaining children's home language have been conducted with Chinese families, and most of the studies are qualitative studies that target a small Chinese population who live in big cities. This study captures a bigger picture that involve 479 Chinese families that are living in the United States, which can give people more ideas regarding how Chinese parents maintain their home language, and the needs to support these families.

Maintaining home language while living in a mainstream American society is not an easy task, it requires efforts and support from the individual, family, friends, professionals, and the society.

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**APPENDIX A. SURVEY****Survey: Understanding home language use in Chinese families who are living in the United States**

Introduction: For this study, I would like to ask you (father or mother) about the use of home language in your family, including you and your child living in the United States. Home language, which is also called mother tongue or native language, is the first language a person has learned from birth. In this study, home language can be Mandarin Chinese, Cantonese Chinese, or other Chinese language dialects. The survey asks for general information about your family and your child. I would like you to answer questions about your youngest child if you have more than one child (a child who is either born in the U.S. or immigrated to U.S. as a young age is preferred). You will be answering 25 questions in this survey. Please complete only ONE survey per family.

The first section asks information about you and your child. Please check the answer that best answers each question.

1. What's this child's Gender?
  - Female
  - Male
  
2. What's this child's age? \_\_\_\_\_
  
3. What's your relationship to this child?
  - Mother
  - Father
  - Other \_\_\_\_\_
  
4. U.S. State where you are living [note: this will be a pull down menu with all 50 states & District of Columbia]?
  
5. What's this child's mother's highest education level?
  - Elementary
  - High school
  - Some college or Associates' degree
  - Bachelor's degree

- Some graduate school
  - Graduate: master's/doctorate
6. What's this child's father's highest education level?
- Elementary
  - High school
  - Some college or Associates' degree
  - Bachelor's degree
  - Some graduate school
  - Graduate: master's/doctorate
7. Please indicate the number of years you have been living in the U.S. \_\_\_\_\_
8. What was the age of this child when you moved to U.S. \_\_\_\_\_
9. What is your long-term plan about staying in the U.S.?
- Will stay in the U.S. for less than 5 years
  - Will stay in the U.S. for 5-10 years
  - Will stay in the U.S for more than 10 years.
  - Not sure
10. Please select the range of your family annual income.
- Under \$15,000
  - \$15,000-\$35,000
  - \$35,000-\$55,000
  - \$55,000-75,000
  - 75,000-95,000
  - Above \$95,000
11. What is the primary language you speak with your child at home?
- Mandarin Chinese

- Cantonese Chinese
- English
- Other \_\_\_\_\_

The section is about the use of home language by you and your child. Please check the answer(s) that best answers each question.

12. How much time each day do you communicate with your child in your home language?

- All the time
- Most of the time
- Sometimes
- Very little time
- None

13. How much time each day does your child speak your home language with you?

- All the time
- Most of the time
- Sometimes
- Very little time
- None

14. Please check the places your child uses his or her home language.

- Home
- School
- Child care/after school program
- Religious center (e.g., church, temple, connection group)
- Community and recreation programs
- With friends and family outside of home
- Other \_\_\_\_\_

15. When my child talks to me in English, I:

- Answer in my home language
- Answer in English
- Answer in either language
- Remind my child to use home language

16. Of the programs (videos, TV shows) your child watches at home, how many of them are in your home language?

- All of them
- Most of them
- Some of them
- None

17. How many children's books in your home language do you have at home in the U.S?

- None
- 1-5
- 5-10
- More than 10

18. Check all the items your child has learned or is learning about your home language (either in a home language class or through family):

- Listening
- Speaking
- Reading
- Writing
- Understanding of our culture
- Not applicable (none of the above)

The third section is about your opinion and attitude toward home language use. Please rate your opinion about the following statements:



19. I believe that it is important to teach my child our home language.

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neither agree or disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

20. I believe that my child can maintain our home culture without knowing our home language.

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neither agree or disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

21. I believe that my child must learn our home language in order to have an advantage in the future job market.

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neither agree or disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

The fourth section asks the strategies and resources you use to maintain your child's home language.

22. What kind of strategies have you been using for maintaining your child's home language, check all that apply:

- Watch media (TV or radio programs, internet)
- Visit with other Chinese speaking relatives or friends
- Visit home country

- Read Chinese books, newspapers, magazines
- Attend weekend Chinese school
- Teach child about home culture
- Attend Chinese cultural groups
- Others \_\_\_\_\_

23. Where do you seek support/resources that help you maintain your child's home language, check all that apply:

- Family members (living in U.S. and outside of U.S.)
- Friends
- Chinese community or cultural groups
- Chinese church
- Child's school
- Other places: \_\_\_\_\_

24. How satisfied are you with the support/resources that help maintain your child's home language?

- Strongly satisfied
- Satisfied
- Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied
- Dissatisfied
- Strongly dissatisfied

25. What is the biggest challenge for you to help your child maintain home language?

- Lack of chance to use home language
- No community support or programs available
- Child is not interested
- No time for tutoring my child
- Other (please describe): \_\_\_\_\_

If you would like a report of the study result, please provide your email address\_\_\_\_\_

Please also pass on this link to other Chinese people you know who are living in the U.S. Thank you very much!

## APPENDIX B. IRB INITIAL APPROVAL

**IOWA STATE UNIVERSITY**  
OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

Institutional Review Board  
Office for Responsible Research  
Vice President for Research  
1138 Pearson Hall  
Ames, Iowa 50011-2207  
515 294-4566  
FAX 515 294-4267

**Date:** 11/27/2013

**To:** Liuran Fan  
73 LeBaron

**CC:** Dr. Gayle Luze  
51B LeBaron Hall

**From:** Office for Responsible Research

**Title:** Understanding Home Language Use in Chinese Families Who are Living in the United States

**IRB ID:** 13-539

**Study Review Date:** 11/26/2013

The project referenced above has been declared exempt from the requirements of the human subject protections regulations as described in 45 CFR 46.101(b) because it meets the following federal requirements for exemption:

- (2) Research involving the use of educational tests (cognitive, diagnostic, aptitude, achievement), survey or interview procedures with adults or observation of public behavior where
  - Information obtained is recorded in such a manner that human subjects cannot be identified directly or through identifiers linked to the subjects; or
  - Any disclosure of the human subjects' responses outside the research could not reasonably place the subject at risk of criminal or civil liability or be damaging to their financial standing, employability, or reputation.

The determination of exemption means that:

- **You do not need to submit an application for annual continuing review.**
- **You must carry out the research as described in the IRB application.** Review by IRB staff is required prior to implementing modifications that may change the exempt status of the research. In general, review is required for any modifications to the research procedures (e.g., method of data collection, nature or scope of information to be collected, changes in confidentiality measures, etc.), modifications that result in the inclusion of participants from vulnerable populations, and/or any change that may increase the risk or discomfort to participants. Changes to key personnel must also be approved. The purpose of review is to determine if the project still meets the federal criteria for exemption.

Non-exempt research is subject to many regulatory requirements that must be addressed prior to implementation of the study. Conducting non-exempt research without IRB review and approval may constitute non-compliance with federal regulations and/or academic misconduct according to ISU policy.

**Detailed information about requirements for submission of modifications can be found on the Exempt Study Modification Form.** A Personnel Change Form may be submitted when the only modification involves changes in study staff. If it is determined that exemption is no longer warranted, then an Application for Approval of Research Involving Humans Form will need to be submitted and approved before proceeding with data collection.

Please note that you must submit all research involving human participants for review. **Only the IRB or designees may make the determination of exemption**, even if you conduct a study in the future that is exactly like this study.

Please be aware that **approval from other entities may also be needed.** For example, access to data from private records (e.g. student, medical, or employment records, etc.) that are protected by FERPA, HIPAA, or other confidentiality policies requires permission from the holders of those records. Similarly, for research conducted in institutions other than ISU (e.g., schools, other colleges or universities, medical facilities, companies, etc.), investigators must obtain permission from the institution(s) as required by their policies. **An IRB determination of exemption in no way implies or guarantees that permission from these other entities will be granted.**

## APPENDIX C. IRB MODIFICATION APPROVAL

**IOWA STATE UNIVERSITY**  
OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

Institutional Review Board  
Office for Responsible Research  
Vice President for Research  
1138 Pearson Hall  
Ames, Iowa 50011-2207  
515 294-4566  
FAX 515 294-4267

**Date:** 1/28/2014

**To:** Liuran Fan  
73 LeBaron

**CC:** Dr. Gayle Luze  
51B LeBaron Hall

**From:** Office for Responsible Research

**Title:** Understanding Home Language Use in Chinese Families Who are Living in the United States

**IRB ID:** 13-539

**Study Review Date:** 1/28/2014

The project referenced above has been declared exempt from the requirements of the human subject protections regulations as described in 45 CFR 46.101(b) because it meets the following federal requirements for exemption:

- (2) Research involving the use of educational tests (cognitive, diagnostic, aptitude, achievement), survey or interview procedures with adults or observation of public behavior where
  - Information obtained is recorded in such a manner that human subjects cannot be identified directly or through identifiers linked to the subjects; or
  - Any disclosure of the human subjects' responses outside the research could not reasonably place the subject at risk of criminal or civil liability or be damaging to their financial standing, employability, or reputation.

The determination of exemption means that:

- **You do not need to submit an application for annual continuing review.**
- **You must carry out the research as described in the IRB application.** Review by IRB staff is required prior to implementing modifications that may change the exempt status of the research. In general, review is required for any modifications to the research procedures (e.g., method of data collection, nature or scope of information to be collected, changes in confidentiality measures, etc.), modifications that result in the inclusion of participants from vulnerable populations, and/or any change that may increase the risk or discomfort to participants. Changes to key personnel must also be approved. The purpose of review is to determine if the project still meets the federal criteria for exemption.

Non-exempt research is subject to many regulatory requirements that must be addressed prior to implementation of the study. Conducting non-exempt research without IRB review and approval may constitute non-compliance with federal regulations and/or academic misconduct according to ISU policy.

**Detailed information about requirements for submission of modifications can be found on the Exempt Study Modification Form.** A Personnel Change Form may be submitted when the only modification involves changes in study staff. If it is determined that exemption is no longer warranted, then an Application for Approval of Research Involving Humans Form will need to be submitted and approved before proceeding with data collection.

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Please be aware that **approval from other entities may also be needed.** For example, access to data from private records (e.g. student, medical, or employment records, etc.) that are protected by FERPA, HIPAA, or other confidentiality policies requires permission from the holders of those records. Similarly, for research conducted in institutions other than ISU (e.g., schools, other colleges or universities, medical facilities, companies, etc.), investigators must obtain permission from the institution(s) as required by their policies. **An IRB determination of exemption in no way implies or guarantees that permission from these other entities will be granted.**